SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE

VOL. LVI DECEMBER, 1914 NO. 6

THE WAIF WOMAN

A CUE—FROM A SAGA

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY N. C. WYETH

THIS is a tale of Iceland, the isle of stories, and of a thing that befell in the year of the coming there of Christianity.

In the spring of that year a ship sailed from the South Isles to traffic, and fell becalmed inside Snowfellness. The winds had speeded her; she was the first comer of the year; and the fishers drew alongside to hear the news of the south, and eager folk put out in boats to see the merchandise and make prices. From the doors of the hall on Frodis Water, the house folk saw the ship becalmed and the boats about her, coming and going; and the merchants from the ship could see the smoke go up and the men and women trooping to their meals in the hall.

The goodman of that house was called Finnward Keelfarer, and his wife Aud the Light-Minded; and they had a son Eyolf, a likely boy, and a daughter Asdis, a slip of a maid. Finnward was well to do in his affairs, he kept open house and had good friends. But Aud his wife was not so much considered: her mind was set on trifles, on bright clothing, and the admiration of men, and the envy of women; and it was thought she was not always so circumspect in her bearing as she might have been, but nothing to hurt.

*** This unpublished story, preserved among Mrs. Stevenson's papers, is mentioned by Mr. Balfour in his life of Stevenson. Writing of the fables which Stevenson began before he had left England and "attacked again, and from time to time added to their number" in 1893, Mr. Balfour says: "The reference to Odin [Fable XVII] perhaps is due to his reading of the Sagas, which led him to attempt a tale in the same style, called 'The Waif Woman.'"

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On the evening of the second day men came to the house from sea. They told of the merchandise in the ship, which was well enough and to be had at easy rates, and of a waif woman that sailed in her, no one could tell why, and had chests of clothes beyond comparison, fine colored stuffs, finely woven, the best that ever came into that island, and gewgaws for a queen. At the hearing of that Aud's eyes began to glisten. She went early to bed; and the day was not yet red before she was on the beach, had a boat launched, and was pulling to the ship. By the way she looked closely at all boats, but there was no woman in any; and at that she was better pleased, for she had no fear of the men.

When they came to the ship, boats were there already, and the merchants and the shore folk sat and jested and chaffered in the stern. But in the fore part of the ship, the woman sat alone, and looked before her sourly at the sea. They called her Thorgunna. She was as tall as a man and high in flesh, a buxom wife to look at. Her hair was of the dark red, time had not changed it. Her face was dark, the cheeks full, and the brow smooth. Some of the merchants told that she was sixty years of age and others laughed and said she was but forty; but they spoke of her in whispers, for they seemed to think that she was ill to deal with and not more than ordinary canny.

Aud went to where she sat and made her welcome to Iceland. Thorgunna did the honors of the ship. So for a while they carried it on, praising and watching each other, in the way of women. But Aud was a little vessel to contain a great longing, and presently the cry of her heart came out of her.

"The folk say," says she, "you have the finest women's things that ever came to Iceland?" and as she spoke her eyes grew big.

"It would be strange if I had not," quoth Thorgunna. "Queens have no finer."

So Aud begged that she might see them.

Thorgunna looked on her askance. "Truly," said she, "the things are for no use but to be shown." So she fetched a chest and opened it. Here was a cloak of the rare scarlet laid upon with silver, beautiful beyond belief; hard by was a silver brooch of basket-work that was wrought as fine as any shell and was as broad as the face of the full moon; and Aud saw the clothes lying folded in the chest, of all the colors of the day, and fire, and precious gems; and her heart burned with envy. So, because she had so huge a mind to buy, she began to make light of the merchandise.

"They are good enough things," says she, "though I have better in my chest at home. It is a good enough cloak, and I am in need of a new cloak." At that she fingered the scarlet, and the touch of the fine stuff went to her mind like singing. "Come," says she, "if it were only for your civility in showing it, what will you have for your cloak?"

"Woman," said Thorgunna, "I am no merchant." And she closed the chest and locked it, like one angry.

Then Aud fell to protesting and caressing her. That was Aud's practice; for she thought if she hugged and kissed a person none could say her nay. Next she went to flattery, said she knew the things were too noble for the like of her—they were made for a stately, beautiful woman like Thorgunna; and at that she kissed her again, and Thorgunna seemed a little pleased. And now Aud pled poverty and begged for the cloak in a gift; and now she vaunted the wealth of her goodman and offered ounces and ounces of fine silver, the price of three men's lives. Thorgunna smiled, but it was a grim smile, and still she shook her head. At last Aud wrought herself into extremity and wept.

"I would give my soul for it," she cried.

"Fool!" said Thorgunna. "But there have been fools before you!" And a little after, she said this: "Let us be done with beseeching. The things are mine. I was a fool to show you them; but where is their use, unless we show them? Mine they are and mine they shall be till I die. I have paid for them dear enough," said she.

Aud saw it was of no avail; so she dried her tears, and asked Thorgunna about her voyage, and made believe to listen while she plotted in her little mind. "Thorgunna," she asked presently, "do you count kin with any folk in Iceland?"

"I count kin with none," replied Thor-

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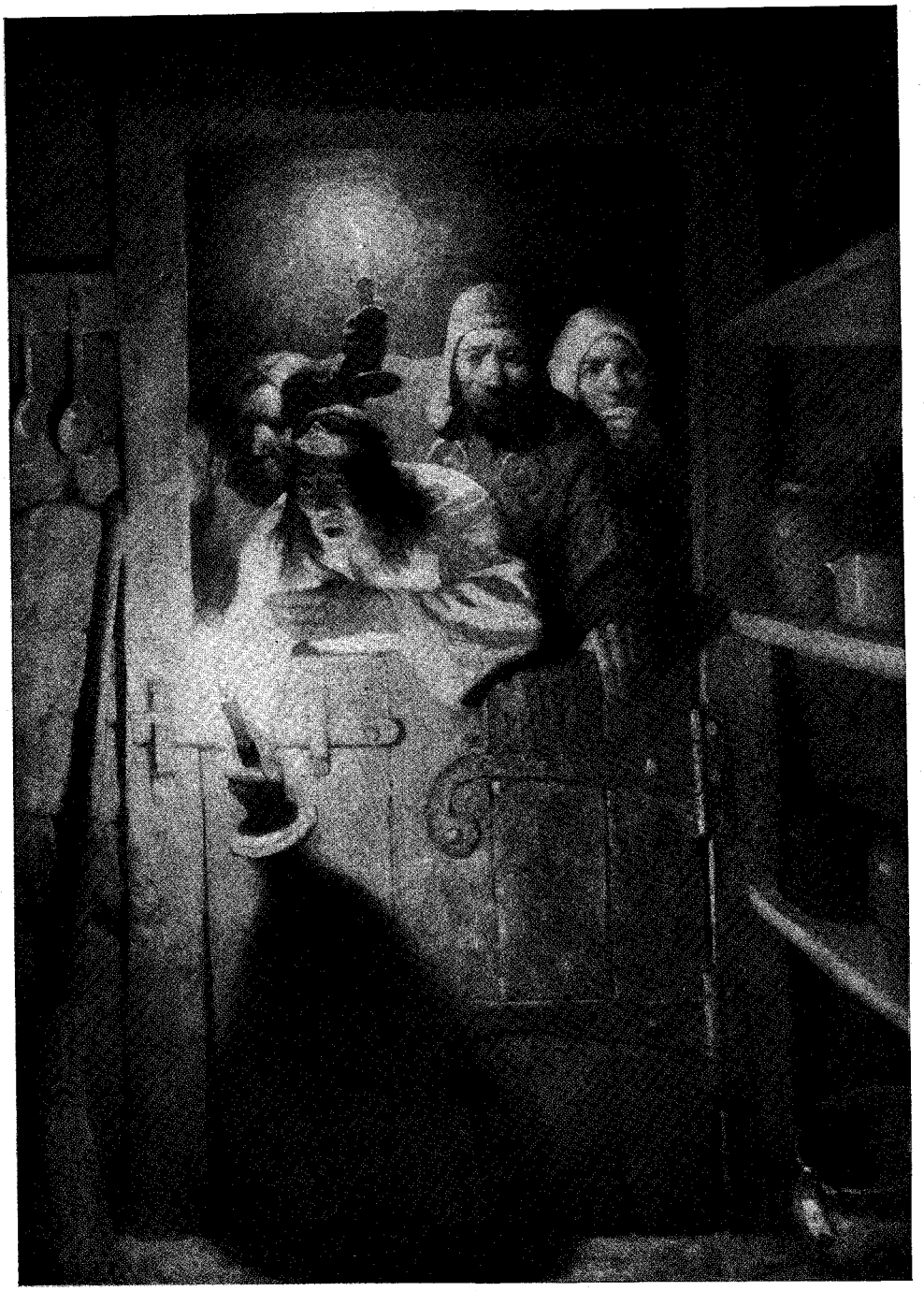

Painted by N. C. Wyeth.

THE FIRST WALKING OF THORGUNNA.

Great fear fell upon them; the marrow of their back grew cold.—Page 694.

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gunna. "My kin is of the greatest, but I have not been always lucky, so I say the less."

"So that you have no house to pass the time in till the ship return?" cries Aud. "Dear Thorgunna, you must come and live with us. My goodman is rich, his hand and his house are open, and I will cherish you like a daughter."

At that Thorgunna smiled on the one side; but her soul laughed within her at the woman's shallowness. "I will pay her for that word *daughter*," she thought, and she smiled again.

"I will live with you gladly," says she, "for your house has a good name, and I have seen the smoke of your kitchen from the ship. But one thing you shall understand. I make no presents, I give nothing where I go—not a rag and not an ounce. Where I stay, I work for my upkeep; and as I am strong as a man and hardy as an ox, they that have had the keeping of me were the better pleased."

It was a hard job for Aud to keep her countenance, for she was like to have wept. And yet she felt it would be unseemly to eat her invitation; and like a shallow woman and one that had always led her husband by the nose, she told herself she would find some means to cajole Thorgunna and come by her purpose after all. So she put a good face on the thing, had Thorgunna into the boat, her and her two great chests, and brought her home with her to the hall by the beach.

All the way in she made much of the wife; and when they were arrived gave her a locked bed-place in the hall, where was a bed, a table, and a stool, and space for the two chests.

"This shall be yours while you stay here," said Aud. And she attended on her guest.

Now Thorgunna opened the second chest and took out her bedding—sheets of English linen, the like of it never seen, a cover of quilted silk, and curtains of purple wrought with silver. At the sight of these Aud was like one distracted, greed blinded her mind; the cry rose strong in her throat, it must out.

"What will you sell your bedding for?" she cried, and her cheeks were hot.

Thorgunna looked upon her with a dusky countenance. "Truly you are a courteous hostess," said she, "but I will not sleep on straw for your amusement."

At that Aud's two ears grew hot as her cheeks; and she took Thorgunna at her word, and left her from that time in peace.

The woman was as good as her spoken word. Inside the house and out she wrought like three, and all that she put her hand to was well done. When she milked, the cows yielded beyond custom; when she made hay, it was always dry weather; when she took her turn at the cooking, the folk licked their spoons. Her manners when she pleased were outside imitation, like one that had sat with kings in their high buildings. It seemed she was pious too, and the day never passed but she was in the church there praying. The rest was not so well. She was of few words, and never one about her kin and fortunes. Gloom sat on her brow, and she was ill to cross. Behind her back they gave her the name of the Waif Woman or the Wind Wife; to her face it must always be Thorgunna. And if any of the young men called her *mother*, she would speak no more that day, but sit apart in the hall and mutter with her lips.

"This is a queer piece of goods that we have gotten," says Finnward Keelfarer, "I wish we get no harm by her! But the goodwife's pleasure must be done," said he, which was his common word.

When she was at work, Thorgunna wore the rudest of plain clothes, though ever clean as a cat; but at night in the hall she was more dainty, for she loved to be admired. No doubt she made herself look well, and many thought she was a comely woman still, and to those she was always favorable and full of pleasant speech. But the more that some pleased her, it was thought by good judges that they pleased Aud the less.

When midsummer was passed, a company of young men upon a journey came to the house by Frodis Water. That was always a great day for Aud, when there were gallants at table; and what made this day the greater, Alf of the Fells was in the company, and she thought Alf fancied her. So be sure Aud wore her best. But when Thorgunna came from the bed-place, she was arrayed like any queen and the broad brooch was in her bosom. All night in the hall these women strove with each

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It was a rough day, the sea was wild, the boat labored exceedingly.—Page 698.

other; and the little maid, Asdis, looked on, and was ashamed and knew not why. But Thorgunna pleased beyond all; she told of strange things that had befallen in the world; when she pleased, she had the cue to laughter; she sang, and her voice was full and her songs new in that island; and whenever she turned, the eyes shone in her face and the brooch glittered at her bosom. So that the young men forgot the word of the merchants as to the woman's age, and their looks followed her all night.

Aud was sick with envy. Sleep fled her; her husband slept, but she sat upright beside him in the bed, and gnawed her fingers. Now she began to hate Thorgunna, and the glittering of the great brooch stood before her in the dark. "Sure," she thought, "it must be the glamour of that brooch! She is not so fair as I; she is as old as the dead in the hillside; and as for her wit and her songs, it is little I think of them!" Up she got at that, took a light from the embers, and came to her guest's bed-place. The door was locked, but Aud had a master-key and could go in. Inside, the chests were open, and in the top of one the light of her taper shone upon the glittering of the brooch. As a dog snatches food she snatched it, and turned to the bed. Thorgunna lay on her side; it was to be thought she slept, but she talked the while to herself, and her lips moved. It seemed her years returned to her in slumber, for her face was gray and her brow knotted; and the open eyes of her stared in the eyes of Aud. The heart of the foolish woman died in her bosom; but her greed was the stronger, and she fled with that which she had stolen.

When she was back in bed, the word of Thorgunna came to her mind, that these things were for no use but to be shown. Here she had the brooch and the shame of it, and might not wear it. So all night she quaked with the fear of discovery, and wept tears of rage that she should have sinned in vain. Day came, and Aud must rise; but she went about the house like a crazy woman. She saw the eyes of Asdis rest on her strangely, and at that she beat the maid. She scolded the house folk, and, by her way of it, nothing was done aright. First she was loving to her husband and made much of him, thinking to be on his good side when trouble came. Then she took a better way, picked a feud with him, and railed on the poor man till his ears rang, so that he might be in the wrong beforehand. The brooch she hid without, in the side of a hayrick.

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All this while Thorgunna lay in the bed-place, which was not her way, for by custom she was early astir. At last she came forth, and there was that in her face that made all the house look one at the other and the heart of Aud to be straitened. Never a word the guest spoke, not a bite she swallowed, and they saw the strong shudderings take and shake her in her place. Yet a little, and still without speech, back she went into her bed-place, and the door was shut.

"That is a sick wife," said Finnward. "Her weird has come on her."

And at that the heart of Aud was lifted up with hope.

All day Thorgunna lay on her bed, and the next day sent for Finnward.

"Finnward Keelfarer," said she, "my trouble is come upon me, and I am at the end of my days."

He made the customary talk.

"I have had my good things; now my hour is come; and let suffice," quoth she. "I did not send for you to hear your prating."

Finnward knew not what to answer, for he saw her soul was dark.

"I sent for you on needful matters," she began again. "I die here—I!—in this black house, in a bleak island, far from all decency and proper ways of men; and now my treasure must be left. Small pleasure have I had of it, and leave it with the less!" cried she.

"Good woman, as the saying is, needs must," says Finnward, for he was nettled with that speech.

"For that I called you," quoth Thorgunna. "In these two chests are much wealth and things greatly to be desired. I wish my body to be laid in Skalaholt in the new church, where I trust to hear the mass-priests singing over my head so long as time endures. To that church I will you to give what is sufficient, leaving your conscience judge of it. My scarlet cloak with the silver, I will to that poor fool your wife. She longed for it so bitterly, I may not even now deny her. Give her the brooch as well. I warn you of her; I was such as she, only wiser; I warn you, the ground she stands upon is water, and who-so trusts her leans on rottenness. I hate her and I pity her. When she comes to lie where I lie—" There she broke off.

"The rest of my goods I leave to your black-eyed maid, young Asdis, for her slim body and clean mind. Only the things of my bed, you shall see burned."

"It is well," said Finnward.

"It may be well," quoth she, "if you obey. My life has been a wonder to all and a fear to many. While I lived none thwarted me and prospered. See to it that none thwart me after I am dead. It stands upon your safety."

"It stands upon my honor," quoth Finnward, "and I have the name of an honorable man."

"You have the name of a weak one," says Thorgunna. "Look to it, look to it, Finnward. Your house shall rue it else."

"The rooftree of my house is my word," said Finnward.

"And that is a true saying," says the woman. "See to it, then. The speech of Thorgunna is ended."

With that she turned her face against the wall and Finnward left her.

The same night, in the small hours of the clock, Thorgunna passed. It was a wild night for summer, and the wind sang about the eaves and clouds covered the moon, when the dark woman wended. From that day to this no man has learned her story or her people's name; but be sure the one was stormy and the other great. She had come to that isle, a waif woman, on a ship; thence she flitted, and no more remained of her but her heavy chests and her big body.

In the morning the house women streaked and dressed the corpse. Then came Finnward, and carried the sheets and curtains from the house, and caused build a fire upon the sands. But Aud had an eye on her man's doings.

"And what is this that you are at?" said she.

So he told her.

"Burn the good sheets!" she cried. "And where would I be with my two hands? No, troth," said Aud, "not so long as your wife is above ground!"

"Good wife," said Finnward, "this is beyond your province. Here is my word pledged and the woman dead I pledged it to. So much the more am I bound. Let me be doing as I must, goodwife."

"Tilly-valley!" says she, "and a fiddle-stick's end, goodman! You may know

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well about fishing and be good at shearing sheep for what I know; but you are little of a judge of damask sheets. And the best word I can say is just this," she says, laying hold of one end of the goods, "that if ye are made up to burn the plenishing, you must burn your wife along with it."

"I trust it will not go so hard," says Finnward, "and I beg you not to speak so loud and let the house folk hear you."

"Let them speak low that are ashamed!" cries Aud. "I speak only in reason."

"You are to consider that the woman died in my house," says Finnward, "and this was her last behest. In truth, goodwife, if I were to fail, it is a thing that would stick long in my throat, and would give us an ill name with the neighbors."

"And you are to consider," says she, "that I am your true wife and worth all the witches ever burnt, and loving her old husband"—here she put her arms about his neck. "And you are to consider that what you wish to do is to destroy fine stuff, such as we have no means of replacing; and that she bade you do it singly to spite me, for I sought to buy this bedding from her while she was alive at her own price; and that she hated me because I was young and handsome."

"That is a true word that she hated you, for she said so herself before she wended," says Finnward.

"So that here is an old fagot that hated me, and she dead as a bucket," says Aud; "and here is a young wife that loves you dear, and is alive forby"—and at that she kissed him—"and the point is, which are you to do the will of?"

The man's weakness caught him hard, and he faltered. "I fear some hurt will come of it," said he.

There she cut in, and bade the lads tread out the fire, and the lasses roll the bed-stuff up and carry it within.

"My dear," says he, "my honor—this is against my honor."

But she took his arm under hers, and caressed his hand, and kissed his knuckles, and led him down the bay. "Bubble-bubble-bubble!" says she, imitating him like a baby, though she was none so young. "Bubble-bubble, and a silly old man! We must bury the troll wife, and here is trouble enough, and a vengeance! Horses will sweat for it before she comes to Skalaholt; 'tis my belief she was a man in a woman's habit. And so now, have done, good man, and let us get her waked and buried, which is more than she deserves, or her old duds are like to pay for. And when that is ended, we can consult upon the rest."

So Finnward was but too well pleased to put it off.

The next day they set forth early for Skalaholt across the heaths. It was heavy weather, and gray overhead; the horses sweated and neighed, and the men went silent, for it was nowhere in their minds that the dead wife was canny. Only Aud talked by the way, like a silly sea-gull piping on a cliff, and the rest held their peace. The sun went down before they were across Whitewater; and the black night fell on them this side of Netherness. At Netherness they beat upon the door. The goodman was not abed nor any of his folk, but sat in the hall talking; and to them Finnward made clear his business.

"I will never deny you a roof," said the goodman of Netherness. "But I have no food ready, and if you cannot be doing without meat, you must e'en fare farther."

They laid the body in a shed, made fast their horses, and came into the house, and the door was closed again. So there they sat about the lights, and there was little said, for they were none so well pleased with their reception. Presently, in the place where the food was kept, began a clattering of dishes; and it fell to a bondman of the house to go and see what made the clatter. He was no sooner gone than he was back again; and told it was a big, buxom woman, high in flesh and naked as she was born, setting meats upon a dresser. Finnward grew pale as the dawn; he got to his feet, and the rest rose with him, and all the party of the funeral came to the buttery-door. And the dead Thorgunna took no heed of their coming, but went on setting forth meats, and seemed to talk with herself as she did so; and she was naked to the buff.

Great fear fell upon them; the marrow of their back grew cold. Not one word they spoke, neither good nor bad; but back into the hall, and down upon their bended knees, and to their prayers.

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THE DEATH OF FINNWARD KEELFARER.

This was the first vengeance of Thorgunna.—Page 698.

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"Now, in the name of God, what ails you?" cried the goodman of Netherness.

And when they had told him, shame fell upon him for his churlishness.

"The dead wife reproves me," said the honest man.

And he blessed himself and his house, and caused spread the tables, and they all ate of the meats that the dead wife laid out.

This was the first walking of Thorgunna, and it is thought by good judges it would have been the last as well, if men had been more wise.

The next day they came to Skalaholt, and there was the body buried, and the next after they set out for home. Finnward's heart was heavy, and his mind divided. He feared the dead wife and the living; he feared dishonor and he feared dispeace; and his will was like a sea-gull in the wind. Now he cleared his throat and made as if to speak; and at that Aud cocked her eye and looked at the goodman mocking, and his voice died unborn. At the last, shame gave him courage.

"Aud," said he, "yon was a most uncanny thing at Netherness."

"No doubt," said Aud.

"I have never had it in my mind," said he, "that yon woman was the thing she should be."

"I dare say not," said Aud. "I never thought so either."

"It stands beyond question she was more than canny," says Finnward, shaking his head. "No manner of doubt but what she was ancient of mind."

"She was getting pretty old in body, too," says Aud.

"Wife," says he, "it comes in upon me strongly this is no kind of woman to disobey; above all, being dead and her walking. I think, wife, we must even do as she commanded."

"Now what is ever your word?" says she, riding up close and setting her hand upon his shoulder. "'The goodwife's pleasure must be done'; is not that my Finnward?"

"The good God knows I grudge you nothing," cried Finnward. "But my blood runs cold upon this business. Worse will come of it!" he cried, "worse will flow from it!"

"What is this todo?" cries Aud. "Here is an old brimstone hag that should have been stoned with stones, and hated me besides. Vainly she tried to frighten me when she was living; shall she frighten me now when she is dead and rotten? I trow not. Think shame to your beard, goodman! Are these a man's shoes I see you shaking in, when your wife rides by your bridle-hand, as bold as nails?"

"Ay, ay," quoth Finnward. "But there goes a byword in the country: Little wit, little fear."

At this Aud began to be concerned, for he was usually easier to lead. So now she tried the other method on the man.

"Is that your word?" cried she. "I kiss the hands of ye! If I have not wit enough, I can rid you of my company. Wit is it he seeks?" she cried. "The old broomstick that we buried yesterday had wit for you."

So she rode on ahead and looked not the road that he was on.

Poor Finnward followed on his horse, but the light of the day was gone out, for his wife was like his life to him. He went six miles and was true to his heart; but the seventh was not half through when he rode up to her.

"Is it to be the goodwife's pleasure?" she asked.

"Aud, you shall have your way," says he; "God grant there come no ill of it!"

So she made much of him, and his heart was comforted.

When they came to the house, Aud had the two chests to her own bed-place, and gloated all night on what she found. Finnward looked on, and trouble darkened his mind.

"Wife," says he at last, "you will not forget these things belong to Asdis?"

At that she barked upon him like a dog.

"Am I a thief?" she cried. "The brat shall have them in her turn when she grows up. Would you have me give her them now to turn her minx's head with?"

So the weak man went his way out of the house in sorrow and fell to his affairs. Those that wrought with him that day observed that now he would labor and toil like a man furious, and now would sit and stare like one stupid; for in truth he judged the business would end ill.

For a while there was no more done and no more said. Aud cherished her treasures

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by herself, and none was the wiser except Finnward. Only the cloak she sometimes wore, for that was hers by the will of the dead wife; but the others she let lie, because she knew she had them foully, and she feared Finnward somewhat and Thorgunna much.

At last husband and wife were bound to bed one night, and he was the first stripped and got it.

"What sheets are these?" he screamed, as his legs touched them, for these were smooth as water, but the sheets of Iceland were like sacking.

"Clean sheets, I suppose," says Aud, but her hand quavered as she wound her hair.

"Woman!" cried Finnward, "these are the bed-sheets of Thorgunna—these are the sheets she died in! do not lie to me!"

At that Aud turned and looked at him. "Well?" says she, "they have been washed."

Finnward lay down again in the bed between Thorgunna's sheets, and groaned; never a word more he said, for now he knew he was a coward and a man dishonored. Presently his wife came beside him, and they lay still, but neither slept.

It might be twelve in the night when Aud felt Finnward shudder so strong that the bed shook.

"What ails you?" said she.

"I know not," he said. "It is a chill like the chill of death. My soul is sick with it." His voice fell low. "It was so Thorgunna sickened," said he. And he arose and walked in the hall in the dark till it came morning.

Early in the morning he went forth to the sea-fishing with four lads. Aud was troubled at heart and watched him from the door, and even as he went down the beach she saw him shaken with Thorgunna's shudder. It was a rough day, the sea was wild, the boat labored exceedingly, and it may be that Finnward's mind was troubled with his sickness. Certain it is that they struck, and their boat was burst, upon a skerry under Snowfellness. The four lads were spilled into the sea, and the sea broke and buried them, but Finnward was cast upon the skerry, and clambered up, and sat there all day long: God knows his thoughts. The sun was half-way down, when a shepherd went by on the cliffs about his business, and spied a man in the midst of the breach of the loud seas, upon a pinnacle of reef. He hailed him, and the man turned and hailed again. There was in that cove so great a clashing of the seas and so shrill a cry of sea-fowl that the herd might hear the voice and not the words. But the name Thorgunna came to him, and he saw the face of Finnward Keelfarer like the face of an old man. Lively ran the herd to Finnward's house; and when his tale was told there, Eyolf the boy was lively to out a boat and hasten to his father's aid. By the strength of hands they drove the keel against the seas, and with skill and courage Eyolf won upon the skerry and climbed up. There sat his father dead; and this was the first vengeance of Thorgunna against broken faith.

It was a sore job to get the corpse on board, and a sorer yet to bring it home before the rolling seas. But the lad Eyolf was a lad of promise, and the lads that pulled for him were sturdy men. So the break-faith's body was got home, and waked, and buried on the hill. Aud was a good widow and wept much, for she liked Finnward well enough. Yet a bird sang in her ears that now she might marry a young man. Little fear that she might have her choice of them, she thought, with all Thorgunna's fine things; and her heart was cheered.

Now, when the corpse was laid in the hill, Asdis came where Aud sat solitary in hall, and stood by her awhile without speech.

"Well, child?" says Aud; and again "Well?" and then "Keep us holy, if you have anything to say, out with it!"

So the maid came so much nearer. "Mother," says she, "I wish you would not wear these things that were Thorgunna's."

"Aha," cries Aud. "This is what it is? You begin early, brat! And who has been poisoning your mind? Your fool of a father, I suppose." And then she stopped and went all scarlet. "Who told you they were yours?" she asked again, taking it all the higher for her stumble. "When you are grown, then you shall have your share, and not a day before. These things are not for babies."

The child looked at her and was amazed. "I do not wish them," she said. "I wish they might be burned."

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The Waif ~~Woman~~ Woman:

A cue-prose Saga.

This is a Tale of ~~Iceland~~ Iceland, the isle of stones; and of a thing that befell in the year after the coming there of christianity.

In the spring of that year a ship sailed from the South isles to traffic, and fell becalmed inside SNOWFELLNESS Snowfellness. The winds had speeded her; she was the first comer of the year; and the fishers drew alongside to hear the news of the south, and eager folk put out in boats to see the merchandise and make prices. From the doors of the hall on FRODIS WATER Frodis Water, the house folk saw the ship lie becalmed and the boats about her, coming and going; and the merchants from the ship could see the smoke go up and the men and women trooping to their meals in the hall

The good man of that house was called FINNWARD KEELFARER Finnward Keelfarer, and his wife AUD Aud the Light-minded; and they had a son EYOLF Eyolf, a likely boy, and a dear-grown ASDIS Asdis, a ship of a maid. Finnward was well to do in his affairs, he kept open house and had good friends But Aud his wife was not so much considered: her mind was set on trifles, on her gilt

Facsimile of part of the first page of Mr. Stevenson's holograph manuscript of "The Waif Woman."

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"Upon my word, what next?" cried Aud. "And why should they be burned?"

"I know my father tried to burn these things," said Asdis, "and he named Thorgunna's name upon the skerry ere he died. And, O mother, I doubt they have brought ill luck."

But the more Aud was terrified, the more she would make light of it.

Then the girl put her hand upon her mother's. "I fear they are ill come by," said she.

The blood sprang in Aud's face. "And who made you a judge upon your mother that bore you?" cried she.

"Kinswoman," said Asdis, looking down, "I saw you with the brooch."

"What do you mean? When? Where did you see me?" cried the mother.

"Here in the hall," said Asdis, looking on the floor, "the night you stole it."

At that Aud let out a cry. Then she heaved up her hand to strike the child. "You little spy!" she cried. Then she covered her face, and wept, and rocked herself. "What can you know?" she cried. "How can you understand, that are a baby, not so long weaned? *He* could —your father could, the dear good man, dead and gone! He could understand and pity, he was good to me. Now he has left me alone with heartless children! Asdis," she cried, "have you no nature in your blood? You do not know what I have done and suffered for them. I have done—oh, and I could have done anything! And there is your father dead. And after all, you ask me not to use them? No woman in Iceland has the like. And you wish me to destroy them? Not if the dead should rise!" she cried. "No, no," and she stopped her ears, "not if the dead should rise, and let that end it!"

So she ran into her bed-place, and clapped to the door, and left the child amazed.

But for all Aud spoke with so much passion, it was noticed that for long she left the things unused. Only she would be locked somewhile daily in the bed-place, where she pored on them and secretly wore them for her pleasure.

Now winter was at hand; the days grew short and the nights long; and under the golden face of morning the isle would stand silver with frost. Word came from Holyfell to Frodis Water of a company of young men upon a journey; that night they supped at Holyfell, the next it would be at Frodis Water; and Alf of the Fells was there, and Thongbrand Ketilson, and Hall the Fair. Aud went early to her bed-place, and there she pored upon these fineries till her heart was melted with self-love. There was a kirtle of a mingled color, and the blue shot into the green, and the green lightened from the blue, as the colors play in the ocean between deeps and shallows: she thought she could endure to live no longer and not wear it. There was a bracelet of an ell long, wrought like a serpent and with fiery jewels for the eyes; she saw it shine on her white arm and her head grew dizzy with desire. "Ah!" she thought, "never were fine lendings better met with a fair wearer." And she closed her eyelids, and she thought she saw herself among the company and the men's eyes go after her admiring. With that she considered that she must soon marry one of them and wondered which; and she thought Alf was perhaps the best, or Hall the Fair, but was not certain; and then she remembered Finnward Keelfarer in his cairn upon the hill, and was concerned. "Well, he was a good husband to me," she thought, "and I was a good wife to him. But that is an old song now." So she turned again to handling the stuffs and jewels. At last she got to bed in the smooth sheets, and lay, and fancied how she would look, and admired herself, and saw others admire her, and told herself stories, till her heart grew warm and she chuckled to herself between the sheets. So she shook awhile with laughter; and then the mirth abated but not the shaking; and a grue took hold upon her flesh, and the cold of the grave upon her belly, and the terror of death upon her soul. With that a voice was in her ear: "It was so Thorgunna sickened." Thrice in the night the chill and the terror took her, and thrice it passed away; and when she rose on the morrow, death had breathed upon her countenance.

She saw the house folk and her children gaze upon her; well she knew why! She knew her day was come, and the last of her days, and her last hour was at her back; and it was so in her soul that she scarce minded. All was lost, all was past

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mending, she would carry on until she fell. So she went as usual, and hurried the feast for the young men, and railed upon her house folk, but her feet stumbled, and her voice was strange in her own ears, and the eyes of the folk fled before her. At times, too, the chill took her and the fear along with it; and she must sit down, and the teeth beat together in her head, and the stool tottered on the floor. At these times, she thought she was passing, and the voice of Thorgunna sounded in her ear: "The things are for no use but to be shown," it said. "Aud, Aud, have you shown them once? No, not once!" And at the sting of the thought her courage and strength would revive, and she would rise again and move about her business.

Now the hour drew near, and Aud went to her bed-place, and did on the bravest of her finery, and came forth to greet her guests. Was never woman in Iceland robed as she was. The words of greeting were yet between her lips, when the shuddering fell upon her strong as labor, and a horror as deep as hell. Her face was changed amidst her finery, and the faces of her guests were changed as they beheld her: fear puckered their brows, fear drew back their feet; and she took her doom from the looks of them, and fled to her bed-place. There she flung herself on the wife's coverlet, and turned her face against the wall.

That was the end of all the words of Aud; and in the small hours on the clock her spirit wended. Asdis had come to and fro, seeing if she might help, where was no help possible of man or woman. It was light in the bed-place when the maid returned, for a taper stood upon a chest. There lay Aud in her fine clothes, and there by her side on the bed the big dead wife Thorgunna squatted on her hams. No sound was heard, but it seemed by the movement of her mouth as if Thorgunna sang, and she waved her arms as if to singing.

"God be good to us!" cried Asdis, "she is dead."

"Dead," said the dead wife.

"Is the weird passed?" cried Asdis.

"When the sin is done the weird is dreed," said Thorgunna, and with that she was not.

But the next day Eyolf and Asdis caused build a fire on the shore betwixt tide-marks. There they burned the bed-clothes, and the clothes, and the jewels, and the very boards of the waif woman's chests; and when the tide returned it washed away their ashes. So the weird of Thorgunna was lifted from the house on Frodis Water.

ANOTHER DARK LADY

By Edwin Arlington Robinson

THINK not, because I wonder where you fled,
That I would lift a pin to see you there;
You may, for me, be prowling anywhere,
So long as you show not your little head:
No dark and evil story of the dead
Would leave you less pernicious or less fair—
Not even Lilith, with her famous hair;
And Lilith was the devil, I have read.

I cannot hate you, for I loved you then.
The woods were golden then. There was a road
Through beeches; and I said their smooth feet showed
Like yours. Truth must have heard me from afar,
For I shall never have to learn again
That yours are cloven as no beech's are.

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"TO BE TREATED AS A SPY"

BY RICHARD HARDING DAVIS

THIS story is a personal experience, but is told in spite of that fact, and because it illustrates a side of war that is unfamiliar. It is unfamiliar for the reason that it is seamy and uninviting. With bayonet-charges, bugle-calls, and aviators it has nothing in common.

Espionage is that kind of warfare of which even when it succeeds no country boasts. It is military service an officer may not refuse but which few seek. Its reward is prompt promotion, and its punishment, in war-time, is swift and without honor. This story is intended to show how an army in the field must be on its guard against even a supposed spy and how it treats him.

The war offices of France and Russia would not permit an American correspondent to accompany their armies; the English granted that privilege to but one correspondent, and that gentleman already had been chosen. So I was without credentials. To oblige Mr. Brand Whitlock, our minister to Belgium, the government there was willing to give me credentials, but on the day I was to receive them the government moved to Antwerp. Then the Germans entered Brussels, and as no one could foresee that Belgium would heroically continue fighting, on the chance the Germans would besiege Paris, I planned to go to that city. To be bombarded you do not need credentials.

For three days a steel-gray column of Germans had been sweeping through Brussels, and to meet them, from the direction of Vincennes and Lille, the English and French had crossed the border. It was falsely reported that already the English had reached Hal, a town only eleven miles from Brussels, that the night before there had been a fight at Hal, and that close behind the English were the French.

With Gerald Morgan, of the *London Daily Telegraph*, with whom I had been in other wars, I planned to drive to Hal and from there on foot continue, if possible, into the arms of the French or English. We both were without credentials, but once with the Allies we believed we would not need them. It was the Germans we doubted. To satisfy them we had only a passport and a *laisser passer* issued by General von Jarotsky, the new German military governor of Brussels, and his chief of staff, Lieutenant Geyer. Mine stated that I represented the Wheeler Syndicate of American newspapers, the *London Daily Chronicle*, and this magazine, and that I could pass German military lines in Brussels and her environs. Morgan had a pass of the same sort. The question to be determined was what were "environs" and how far do they extend? How far in safety would the word carry us forward? On August 23 we set forth from Brussels in a taxi-cab to find out. At Hal, where we intended to abandon the cab and continue on foot, we found out. We were arrested by a smart and most intelligent-looking officer, who rode up to the side of the taxi and pointed an automatic at us. We were innocently seated in a public cab, in a street crowded with civilians and the passing column of soldiers, and why any one should think he needed a gun only the German mind can explain. Later, I found that all German officers introduced themselves and made requests gun in hand. Whether it was because from every one they believed themselves in danger or because they simply did not know any better, I still am unable to decide. With no other army have I seen an officer threaten with a pistol an unarmed civilian. Were an American or English officer to act in such a fashion he might escape looking like a fool, he certainly would feel like one.

The four soldiers the officer told off to guard us climbed with alacrity into our cab and drove with us until the street grew too narrow both for their regiment and our taxi, when they chose the regiment and disappeared. We paid off the

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cabman and followed them. To reach the front there was no other way, and the very openness with which we trailed along beside their army, very much like small boys following a circus procession, seemed to us to show how innocent was our intent. The column stretched for fifty miles. Where it was going we did not know, but we argued if it kept on going and we kept on with it, eventually we must stumble upon a battle. The story that at Hal there had been a fight was evidently untrue; and the manner in which the column was advancing showed it was not expecting one. At noon it halted at Brierges, and Morgan decided Brierges was out of bounds, and that the limits of our "environs" had been reached.

"If we go any farther," he argued, "the next officer who reads our papers will order us back to Brussels under arrest, and we will lose our *laisser passer*. Along this road there is no chance of seeing anything. I prefer to keep my pass and use it in 'environs' where there is fighting." So he returned to Brussels. I thought he was most wise, and I wanted to return with him. But I did not want to go back only because I knew it was the right thing to do, but to be ordered back so that I could explain to my newspapers that I returned because Colonel This or General That sent me back. It was a form of vanity for which I was properly punished.

That Morgan was right was demonstrated as soon as he left me. I was seated against a tree by the side of the road eating a sandwich, an occupation which seems almost idyllic in its innocence but which could not deceive the Germans. In me they saw the hated *Spion*, and from behind me, across a ploughed field, four of them, each with an automatic, made me prisoner. One of them, who was an enthusiast, pushed his gun deep into my stomach. With the sandwich still in my hand, I held up my arms high and asked who spoke English. It turned out that the enthusiast spoke that language, and I suggested he did not need so many guns and that he could find my papers in my inside pocket. With four automatics rubbing against my ribs, I would not have lowered my arms for all the papers in the Bank of England. They took me to a café, where their colonel had just finished lunch and was in a most genial humor. First he gave the enthusiast a drink as a reward for arresting me, and then, impartially, gave me one for being arrested. He wrote on my passport that I could go to Enghien, which was two miles distant. That pass enabled me to proceed unmolested for nearly two hundred yards. I was then again arrested and taken before another group of officers. This time they searched my knapsack and wanted to requisition my maps, but one of them pointed out they were only automobile maps and, as compared to their own, of no value. They permitted me to proceed to Enghien. I went to Enghien, intending to spend the night and on the morning continue. I could not see why I might not be able to go on indefinitely. As yet no one who had held me up had suggested I should turn back, and as long as I was willing to be arrested it seemed as though I might accompany the German army even to the gates of Paris. But my reception in Enghien should have warned me to get back to Brussels. The Germans, thinking I was an English spy, scowled at me; and the Belgians, thinking the same thing, winked at me; and the landlord of the only hotel said I was "suspect" and would not give me a bed. But I sought out the burgomaster, a most charming man named Delano, and he wrote out a pass permitting me to sleep one night in Enghien.

"You really do not need this," he said; "as an American you are free to stay here as long as you wish." Then he, too, winked.

"But I *am* an American," I protested.

"But certainly," he said gravely, and again he winked. It was then I should have started back to Brussels. Instead, I sat on a moss-covered, arched stone bridge that binds the town together, and until night fell watched the gray tidal waves rush up and across it, stamping, tripping, stumbling, beating the broad, clean stones with thousands of iron heels, steel hoofs, steel chains, and steel-rimmed wheels. You hated it, and yet could not keep away. The Belgians of Enghien hated it, and *they* could not keep away. Like a great river in flood, bearing with it destruction and death, you feared and loathed it, and yet it fascinated you and pulled you to the brink. All through the

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night, as already for three nights and three days at Brussels, I had heard it; it rumbled and growled, rushing forward without pause or breath, with inhuman, pitiless persistence. At daybreak I sat on the edge of the bed and wondered whether to go on or turn back. I still wanted some one in authority, higher than myself, to order me back. So, at six, riding for a fall, to find that one, I went, as I thought, along the road to Soignes. The gray tidal wave was still roaring past. It was pressing forward with greater speed, but in nothing else did it differ from the tidal wave that had swept through Brussels.

There was a group of officers seated by the road, and as I passed I wished them good-morning and they said good-morning in return. I had gone a hundred feet when one of them galloped after me and asked to look at my papers. With relief I gave them to him. I was sure now I would be told to return to Brussels. I calculated if at Hal I had luck in finding a taxi-cab, by lunch-time I would be in the Palace Hotel.

"I think," said the officer, "you had better see our general. He is ahead of us."

I thought he meant a few hundred yards ahead, and to be ordered back by a general seemed more convincing than to be returned by a mere captain. So I started to walk on beside the mounted officers. This, as it seemed to presume equality with them, scandalized them greatly, and I was ordered into the ranks. But the one who had arrested me thought I was entitled to a higher rating and placed me with the color-guard, who objected to my presence so violently that a long discussion followed, which ended with my being ranked below a second lieutenant and above a sergeant. Between one of each of these I was definitely placed and for five hours I remained definitely placed. We advanced with a rush that showed me I had surprised a surprise movement. The fact was of interest not because I had discovered one of their secrets, but because to keep up with the column I was forced for five hours to move at what was a steady trot. It was not so fast as the running step of the Italian *bersagliere*, but as fast as our "double-quick." The men did not bend the knees, but, keeping the legs straight, shot them forward with a quick, sliding movement, like men skating or skiing. The toe of one boot seemed always tripping on the heel of the other. As the road was paved with roughly hewn blocks of Belgian granite this kind of going was very strenuous, and had I not been in good shape I could not have kept up. As it was, at the end of the five hours I had lost fifteen pounds, which did not help me, as during the same time the knapsack had taken on a hundred. For two days the men in the ranks had been rushed forward at this unnatural gait and were moving like automatons. Many of them fell by the wayside, but they were not permitted to lie there. Instead of summoning the ambulance, they were lifted to their feet and flung back into the ranks. Many of them were moving in their sleep, in that partly comatose state in which you have seen men during the last hours of a six days' walking match. Their rules, so the sergeant said, were to halt every hour and then for ten minutes' rest. But that rule is probably only for route marching. On account of the speed with which the surprise movement was made our halts were more frequent, and so exhausted were the men that when these "thank you, ma'ams" arrived, instead of standing at ease and adjusting their accoutrements, as though they had been struck with a club they dropped to the stones. Some in an instant were asleep. I do not mean that some sat down; I mean that the whole column lay flat in the road. The officers also, those that were not mounted, would tumble on the grass or into the wheat-field and lie on their backs, their arms flung out like dead men. To the fact that they were lying on their field-glasses, holsters, swords, and water-bottles they appeared indifferent. At the rate the column moved it would have covered thirty miles each day. It was these forced marches that later brought Von Kluck's army to the right wing of the Allies before the army of the crown prince was prepared to attack, and which at Sezanne led to his repulse and to the failure of his advance upon Paris.

While we were pushing forward we passed a wrecked British air-ship, around which were gathered a group of staff-

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officers. My papers were given to one of them, but our column did not halt and I was not allowed to speak. A few minutes later they passed in their automobiles on their way to the front; and my papers went with them. Already I was miles beyond the environs, and with each step away from Brussels my pass was becoming less of a safeguard than a menace. For it showed what restrictions General Jarotsky had placed on my movements, and my presence so far out of bounds proved I had disregarded them. But still I did not suppose that in returning to Brussels there would be any difficulty. I was chiefly concerned with the thought that the length of the return march was rapidly increasing and with the fact that one of my shoes, a faithful friend in other campaigns, had turned traitor and was cutting my foot in half. I had started with the column at seven o'clock, and at noon an automobile, with flags flying and the black eagle of the staff enamelled on the door, came speeding back from the front. In it was a very blond and distinguished-looking officer of high rank and many decorations. He used a single eye-glass, and his politeness and his English were faultless. He invited me to accompany him to the general staff.

That was the first intimation I had that I was in danger. I saw they were giving me far too much attention. I began instantly to work to set myself free, and there was not a minute for the next twenty-four hours that I was not working. Before I stepped into the car I had decided upon my line of defence. I would pretend to be entirely unconscious that I had in any way laid myself open to suspicion; that I had erred through pure stupidity and that I was where I was solely because I was a damn fool. I began to act like a damn fool. Effusively I expressed my regret at putting the general staff to inconvenience.

"It was really too stupid of me," I said. "I cannot forgive myself. I should not have come so far without asking Jarotsky for proper papers. I am extremely sorry I have given you this trouble. I would like to see the general and assure him I will return at once to Brussels." I ignored the fact that I was being taken to the general at the rate of sixty miles an hour. The blond officer smiled uneasily and with his single glass studied the sky. When we reached the staff he escaped from me with the alacrity of one released from a disagreeable and humiliating duty. The staff were at luncheon, seated in their luxurious motor-cars, or on the grass by the side of the road. On the other side of the road the column of dust-covered gray ghosts were being rushed past us. The staff in dress uniforms, flowing cloaks, and gloves belonged to a different race. They knew that. Among themselves they were like priests breathing incense. Whenever one of them spoke to another they saluted, their heels clicked, their bodies bent at the belt line.

One of them came to where, in the middle of the road, I was stranded and trying not to feel as lonely as I looked. He was much younger than myself and dark and handsome. His face was smooth-shaven, his figure tall, lithe, and alert. He wore a uniform of light blue and silver that clung to him and high boots of patent leather. His waist was like a girl's, and, as though to show how supple he was, he kept continually bowing and shrugging his shoulders and in elegant protest gesticulating with his gloved hands. He should have been a moving-picture actor. He reminded me of Anthony Hope's fascinating but wicked Rupert of Hentzau. He certainly was wicked, and I got to hate him as I never imagined it possible to hate anybody. He had been told off to dispose of my case, and he delighted in it. He enjoyed it as a cat enjoys playing with a mouse. As actors say, he saw himself in the part. He "ate" it.

"You are an English officer out of uniform," he began. "You have been taken inside our lines." He pointed his forefinger at my stomach and wiggled his thumb. "And you know what *that* means!"

I saw playing the damn fool with him would be waste of time.

"I followed your army," I told him, "because it's my business to follow armies and because yours is the best-looking army I ever saw." He made me one of his mocking bows.

"We thank you," he said, grinning. "But you have seen too much."

"I haven't seen anything," I said,

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"that everybody in Brussels hasn't seen for three days."

He shook his head reproachfully and with a gesture signified the group of officers.

"You have seen enough in this road," he said, "to justify us in shooting you now."

The sense of drama told him it was a good exit line, and he returned to the group of officers. I now saw what had happened. At Enghien I had taken the wrong road. I remembered that, to confuse the Germans, the names on the sign-post at the edge of the town had been painted out, and that instead of taking the road to Soignes I was on the road to Ath. What I had seen, therefore, was an army corps making a turning movement intended to catch the English on their right and double them up upon their centre. The success of this manœuvre depended upon the speed with which it was executed and upon its being a complete surprise. As later in the day I learned, the Germans thought I was an English officer who had followed them from Brussels and who was trying to slip past them and warn his countrymen. What Rupert of Hentzau meant by what I had seen in the road was that, having seen the Count de Schwerin, who commanded the Seventh Division in the road to Ath, I must necessarily know that the army corps to which he was attached had separated from the main army of Von Kluck, and that, in going so far south at such speed, it was bent upon an attack on the English flank. All of which at the time I did not know and did not *want* to know. All I wanted was to prove I was not an English officer, but an American correspondent who by accident had stumbled upon their secret. To convince them of that, strangely enough, was difficult.

When Rupert of Hentzau returned, the other officers were with him, and, fortunately for me, they spoke or understood English. For the rest of the day what followed was like a legal argument. It was as cold-blooded as a game of bridge. Rupert of Hentzau wanted an English spy shot for his supper; just as he might have desired a grilled bone. He showed no personal animus, and, I must say for him, that he conducted the case for the prosecution without heat or anger. He mocked me, grilled and taunted me, but he was always charmingly polite.

As Whitman said, "I want Becker," so Rupert said, "Fe, fo, fi, fum, I want the blood of an Englishman." He was determined to get it. I was even more interested that he should not. The points he made against me were that my German pass was signed neither by General Jarotsky nor by Lieutenant Geyer, but only stamped, and that any rubber stamp could be forged; that my American passport had not been issued at Washington, but in London, where an Englishman might have imposed upon our embassy; and that in the photograph pasted on the passport I was wearing the uniform of a British officer. I explained that the photograph was taken eight years ago, and that the uniform was one I had seen on the west coast of Africa worn by the West African Field Force. Because it was unlike any known military uniform, and as cool and comfortable as a golf-jacket, I had had it copied. But since that time it had been adopted by the English Brigade of Guards and the Territorials. I knew it sounded like fiction; but it was quite true.

Rupert of Hentzau smiled delightedly.

"Do you expect us to believe that?" he protested.

"Listen," I said. "If you could invent an explanation for that uniform as quickly as I told you that one, standing in a road with eight officers trying to shoot you, you would be the greatest general in Germany."

That made the others laugh; and Rupert retorted: "Very well, then, we will concede that the entire British army has changed its uniform to suit your photograph. But if you are *not* an officer, why, in the photograph, are you wearing war ribbons?"

I said the war ribbons were in my favor, and I pointed out that no officer of any one country could have been in the different campaigns for which the ribbons were issued.

"They prove," I argued, "that I *am* a correspondent, for only a correspondent could have been in wars in which his own country was not engaged."

I thought I had scored; but Rupert instantly turned my own witness against me.

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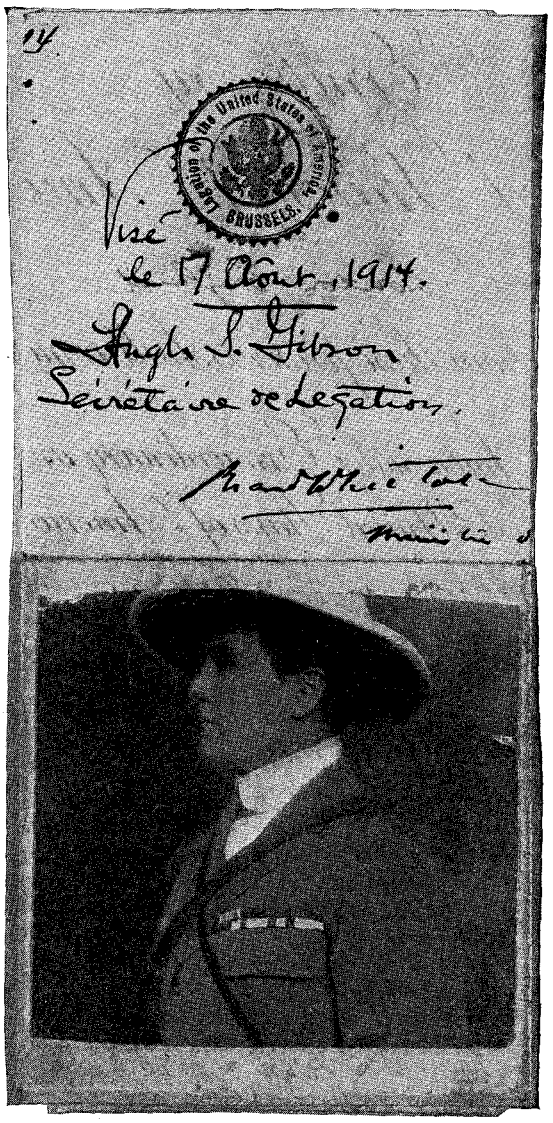
"Or a military attaché," he said. At that they all smiled and nodded knowingly.

He followed this up by saying, accusingly, that the hat and clothes I was then wearing were English. The clothes were English, but I knew he did not know that, and was only guessing; and there were no marks on them. About my hat I was not certain. It was a felt Alpine hat, and whether I had bought it in London or New York I could not remember. Whether it was evidence for or against I could not be sure. So I took it off and began to fan myself with it, hoping to get a look at the name of the maker. But with the eyes of the young prosecuting attorney fixed upon me, I did not dare take a chance. Then, to aid me, a German aeroplane passed overhead and those who were giving me the third degree looked up. I stopped fanning myself and cast a swift glance inside the hat. To my intense satisfaction I read, stamped on the leather lining: "Knox, New York."

I put the hat back on my head and a few minutes later pulled it off and said: "Now, for instance, my hat. If I were an Englishman, would I cross the ocean to New York to buy a hat?"

It was all like that. They would move away and whisper together, and I would try to guess what questions they were preparing. I had to arrange my defence without knowing in what way they would try to trip me, and I had to think faster than I ever have thought before. I had no more time to be scared, or to regret my past sins, than has a man in a quicksand. So far as I could make out, they were divided in opinion concerning me. Rupert of Hentzau, who was the adjutant or the chief of staff, had only one simple thought, which was to shoot me. Others considered me a damn fool; I could hear them laughing and saying: "Er ist ein dummer Mensch." And others thought that whether I was a fool or not, or an American or an Englishman, was not the question; I had seen too much and should be put away. I felt if, instead of having Rupert act as my interpreter, I could personally speak to the general I might talk my way out of it, but Rupert assured me that to set me free the Count de Schwerin lacked authority, and that my papers, which were all against me, must be sub-



The passport and photograph which, though indorsed by Mr. Whitlock and Mr. Gibson, led to the arrest of Mr. Davis.

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mitted to the general of the army corps, and we would not reach him until midnight.

"And *then!*—" he would exclaim, and he would repeat his pantomime of pointing his forefinger at my stomach and wiggling his thumb. He was very popular with me.

Meanwhile they were taking me farther away from Brussels and the "environs."

"When you picked me up," I said, "I was inside the environs, but by the time I reach 'the' general he will see only that I am fifty miles beyond where I am permitted to be. And who is going to tell him it was *you* brought me there? *You* won't!"

Rupert of Hentzau only smiled like the cat that has just swallowed the canary.

He put me in another automobile and they whisked me off, always going farther from Brussels, to Ath and then to Ligne, a little town five miles south. Here they stopped at a house the staff occupied, and, leading me to the second floor, put me in an empty room that seemed built for their purpose. It had a stone floor and white-washed walls and a window so high that even when standing you could see only the roof of another house and a weather-vane. They threw two bundles of wheat on the floor and put a sentry at the door with orders to keep it open. He was a wild man, and thought I was, and every time I moved his automatic moved with me. It was as though he were following me with a spot-light. My foot was badly cut across the instep and I was altogether forlorn and disreputable. So, in order to look less like a tramp when I met the general, I bound up the foot, and, always with one eye on the sentry, and moving very slowly, shaved and put on dry things. From the interest the sentry showed it seemed evident he never had taken a bath himself, nor had seen any one else take one, and he was not quite easy in his mind that he ought to allow it. He seemed to consider it a kind of suicide. I kept on thinking out plans, and when an officer appeared I had one to submit. I offered to give the money I had with me to any one who would motor back to Brussels and take a note to the American minister, Brand Whitlock. My proposition was that if in five hours, or by seven o'clock, he did not arrive in his automobile and assure them that what I said about myself was true, they need not wait until midnight, but could shoot me then.

"If I am willing to take such a chance," I pointed out, "I must be a friend of Mr. Whitlock. If he repudiates me, it will be evident I have deceived you, and you will be perfectly justified in carrying out your plan." I had a note to Whitlock already written. It was composed entirely with the idea that they would read it, and it was much more intimate than my very brief acquaintance with that gentleman justified. But from what I have seen and heard of the ex-mayor of Toledo I felt he would stand for it.

The note read:

"DEAR BRAND:

"I am detained in a house with a garden where the railroad passes through the village of Ligne. Please come quick, or send some one in the legation automobile.

"RICHARD."

The officer to whom I gave this was Major Alfred Wurth, a reservist from Bernburg, on the Saale River. I liked him from the first because after we had exchanged a few words he exclaimed incredulously: "What nonsense! Any one could tell by your accent that you are an American." He explained that when at the university, in the same pension with him were three Americans.

"The staff are making a mistake," he said earnestly. "They will regret it."

I told him that I not only did not want them to regret it, but I did not want them to make it, and I begged him to assure the staff that I was an American. I suggested also that he tell them if anything happened to me there were other Americans who would at once declare war on Germany. The number of these other Americans I overestimated by about ninety millions, but it was no time to consider details.

He asked if the staff might read the letter to the American minister, and, though I hated to deceive him, I pretended to consider this.

"I don't remember just what I wrote," I said, and, to make sure they *would* read it, I tore open the envelope and pretended to reread the letter.

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"I will see what I can do," said Major Wurth; "meanwhile, do not be discouraged. Maybe it will come out all right for you."

After he left me the Belgian gentleman who owned the house and his cook brought me some food. She was the only member of his household who had not deserted him, and together they were serving the staff-officers, he acting as butler, waiter, and valet. The cook was an old peasant woman with a ruffled white cap, and when she left, in spite of the sentry, she patted me encouragingly on the shoulder. The owner of the house was more discreet, and contented himself with winking at me and whispering: "Ça va mal pour vous en bas!" As they both knew what was being said of me down-stairs, their visit did not especially enliven me. Major Wurth returned and said the staff could not spare any one to go to Brussels, but that my note had been forwarded to "the" general. That was as much as I had hoped for. It was intended only as a "stay of proceedings." But the manner of the major was not reassuring. He kept telling me that he thought they would set me free, but even as he spoke tears would come to his eyes and roll slowly down his cheeks. It was most disconcerting. After a while it grew dark and he brought me a candle and left me, taking with him, much to my relief, the sentry and his automatic. This gave me since my arrest my first moment alone, and to find anything that might further incriminate or help me, I used it in going rapidly through my knapsack and pockets. My note-book was entirely favorable. In it there was no word that any German could censor. My only other paper was a letter, of which all day I had been conscious. It was one of introduction from Colonel Theodore Roosevelt to President Poincaré, and whether the Germans would consider it a clean bill of health or a death-warrant I could not make up my mind. Half a dozen times I had been on the point of saying: "Here is a letter from the man your Kaiser delighted to honor, the only civilian who ever reviewed the German army, a former President of the United States."

But I could hear Rupert of Hentzau replying: "Yes, and it is recommending you to our enemy, the President of France!"

I knew that Colonel Roosevelt would have written a letter to the German Emperor as impartially as to M. Poincaré, but I knew also that Rupert of Hentzau would not believe that. So I decided to keep the letter back until the last moment. If it was going to help me, it still would be effective; if it went against me, I would be just as dead. I began to think out other plans. Plans of escape were foolish. I could have crawled out of the window to the rain gutter, but before I had reached the rooftree I would have been shot. And bribing the sentry, even were he willing to be insulted, would not have taken me farther than the stairs, where there were other sentries. I was more safe inside the house than out. They still had my passport and *laisser passer*, and without a pass one could not walk a hundred yards. As the staff had but one plan, and no time in which to think of a better one, the obligation to invent a substitute plan lay upon me. The plan I thought out and which later I outlined to Major Wurth was this. Instead of puting me away at midnight, they would give me a pass back to Brussels. The pass would state that I was a suspected spy and that if before midnight of the 26th of August I were found off the direct road to Brussels, or if by that hour I had not reported to the military governor of Brussels, any one could shoot me on sight. As I have stated, without showing a pass no one could move a hundred yards, and every time I showed my pass to a German it would tell him I was a suspected spy, and if I were not making my way in the right direction he had his orders. With such a pass I was as much a prisoner as in the room at Ligne, and if I tried to evade its conditions I was as good as dead. The advantages of my plan, as I urged them upon Major Wurth, were that it prevented the general staff from shooting an innocent man, which would have greatly distressed them, and were he not innocent would still enable them, after a reprieve of two days, to shoot him. The distance to Brussels was about fifty miles, which, as it was impossible for a civilian to hire a bicycle, motor-car, or cart, I must cover on foot, making twenty-five miles a day. Major Wurth heartily approved of my substitute plan, and added that he thought

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if any motor-trucks or ambulances were returning empty to Brussels, I should be permitted to ride in one of them. He left me, and I never saw him again. It was then about eight o'clock, and as the time passed and he did not return and midnight grew nearer, I began to feel very lonely. Except for the Roosevelt letter, I had played my last card.

As it grew later I persuaded myself they did not mean to act until morning, and I stretched out on the straw and tried to sleep. At midnight I was startled by the light of an electric torch. It was strapped to the chest of an officer, who ordered me to get up and come with him. He spoke only German, and he seemed very angry. The owner of the house and the old cook had shown him to my room, but they stood in the shadow without speaking. Nor, fearing I might compromise them—for I could not see why, except for one purpose, they were taking me out into the night—did I speak to them. We got into another motor-car and in silence drove north from Ligne down a country road to a great château that stood in a magnificent park. Something had gone wrong with the lights of the château, and its hall was lit only by candles that showed soldiers sleeping like dead men on bundles of wheat and others leaping up and down the marble stairs. They put me in a huge armchair of silk and gilt, with two of the gray ghosts to guard me, and from the hall, when the doors of the drawing-room opened, I could see a long table on which were candles in silver candlesticks or set on plates, and many maps and half-empty bottles of champagne. Around the table, standing or seated, and leaning across the maps, were staff-officers in brilliant uniforms. They were much older men and of higher rank than any I had yet seen. They were eating, drinking, gesticulating. In spite of the tumult, some in utter weariness were asleep. It was like a picture of 1870 by Detaille or De Neuville. Apparently, at last I had reached the headquarters of the mysterious general. I had arrived at what, for a suspected spy, was an inopportune moment. The Germans themselves had been surprised, or somewhere south of us had met with a reverse, and the air was vibrating with excitement and something very like panic. Outside, at great speed and with sirens shrieking, automobiles were arriving, and I could hear the officers shouting, "Die Englischen kommen!"

To make their reports they flung themselves up the steps, the electric torches, like bull's-eye lanterns, burning holes in the night. Seeing a civilian under guard, they would stare and ask questions. Even when they came close, owing to the light in my eyes, I could not see them. Sometimes, in a half-circle, there would be six or eight of the electric torches blinding me, and from behind them voices barking at me with strange, guttural noises. Much they said I could not understand, much I did not want to understand, but they made it quite clear it was no fit place for an Englishman.

When the door from the drawing-room opened and Rupert of Hentzau appeared, I was almost glad to see him.

Whenever he spoke to me he always began or ended his sentence with "*Mr. Davis.*" He gave it an emphasis and meaning which was intended to show that he knew it was *not* my name. I would not have thought it possible to put so much insolence into two innocent words. It was as though he said, "Mr. Davis, *alias* Jimmy Valentine." He certainly would have made a great actor.

"*Mr. Davis*," he said, "you are free."

He did not look as disappointed as I knew he would feel if I were free, so I waited for what was to follow.

"You are free," he said, "under certain conditions." The conditions seemed to cheer him. He recited the conditions. They were those I had outlined to Major Wurth. But I am sure Rupert of Hentzau did not guess that. Apparently, he believed Major Wurth had thought of them, and I did not undeceive him. For the substitute plan I was not inclined to rob that officer of any credit. I felt then, and I feel now, that but for him and his interceding for me I would have been left in the road. Rupert of Hentzau gave me the pass. It said I must return to Brussels by way of Ath, Enghien, Hal, and that I must report to the military governor on the 26th or "be treated as a spy"—"*so wird er als Spion behandelt.*"

The pass, literally translated, reads:

"The American reporter Davis must at once return to Brussels via Ath, Enghien,

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Hal, and report to the government at the latest on August 26th. If he is met on any other road before the 26th of August, he will be handled as a spy. Automobiles returning to Brussels, if they can unite it with their duty, can carry him.

"CHIEF OF GENERAL STAFF.
"VON GREGOR, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*"

Fearing my military education was not sufficient to enable me to appreciate this, for the last time Rupert stuck his forefinger in my stomach and repeated cheerfully: "And you know what *that* means. And you will start," he added, with a most charming smile, "in three hours."

He was determined to have his grilled bone.

"At three in the morning!" I cried. "You might as well take me out and shoot me now!"

"You will start in three hours," he repeated.

"A man wandering around at that hour," I protested, "wouldn't live five minutes. It can't be done. *You* couldn't do it." He continued to grin. I knew perfectly well the general had given no such order, and that it was a cat-and-mouse act of Rupert's own invention, and he knew I knew it. But he repeated: "You will start in three hours, *Mr. Davis.*"

I said: "I am going to write about this, and I would like you to read what I write. What is your name?"

He said: "I am the Baron von" — it sounded like "Hossfer"—and, in any case, to that name, care of General de Schwerin of the Seventh Division, I shall mail this magazine. I hope the Allies do not kill Rupert of Hentzau before he reads it! After that! He would have made a great actor.

They put me in the automobile and drove me back to Ligne and the impromptu cell. But now it did not seem like a cell. Since I had last occupied it my chances had so improved that returning to the candle on the floor and the bundles of wheat was like coming home. Though I did not believe Rupert had any authority to order me into the night at the darkest hour of the twenty-four, I was taking no chances. My nerve was not in a sufficiently robust state for me to disobey any German. So, lest I should oversleep, until three o'clock I paced the cell, and then, with all the terrors of a burglar, tiptoed down the stairs. There was no light, and the house was wrapped in silence. Earlier there had been everywhere sentries, and, not daring to breathe, I waited for one of them to challenge, but, except for the creaking of the stairs and of my ankle-bones, which seemed to explode like firecrackers, there was not a sound. I was afraid, and wished myself safely back in my cell, but I was more afraid of Rupert, and I kept on feeling my way until I had reached the garden. There some one spoke to me in French, and I found my host.

"The animals have gone," he said; "all of them. I will give you a bed now, and when it is light you shall have breakfast." I told him my orders were to leave his house at three.

"But it is murder!" he said. With these cheering words in my ears, I thanked him, and he bid me *bon chance.*

In my left hand I placed the pass, folded so that the red seal of the general staff would show, and a match-box. In the other hand I held ready a couple of matches. Each time a sentry challenged I struck the matches on the box and held them in front of the red seal. The instant the matches flashed it was a hundred to one that the man would shoot, but I could not speak German, and there was no other way to make him understand. They were either too surprised or too sleepy to fire, for each of them let me pass. But after I had made a mark of myself three times I lost my nerve and sought cover behind a haystack. I lay there until there was light enough to distinguish trees and telegraph poles, and then walked on to Ath. After that, when they stopped me, if they could not read, the red seal satisfied them; if they were officers and could read, they cursed me with strange, unclean oaths, and ordered me, in the German equivalent, to beat it. It was a delightful walk. I had had no sleep the night before and had eaten nothing, and, though I had cut away most of my shoe, I could hardly touch my foot to the road. Whenever in the villages I tried to bribe any one to carry my knapsack or to give me food, the peasants ran from me. They thought I was a German and talked

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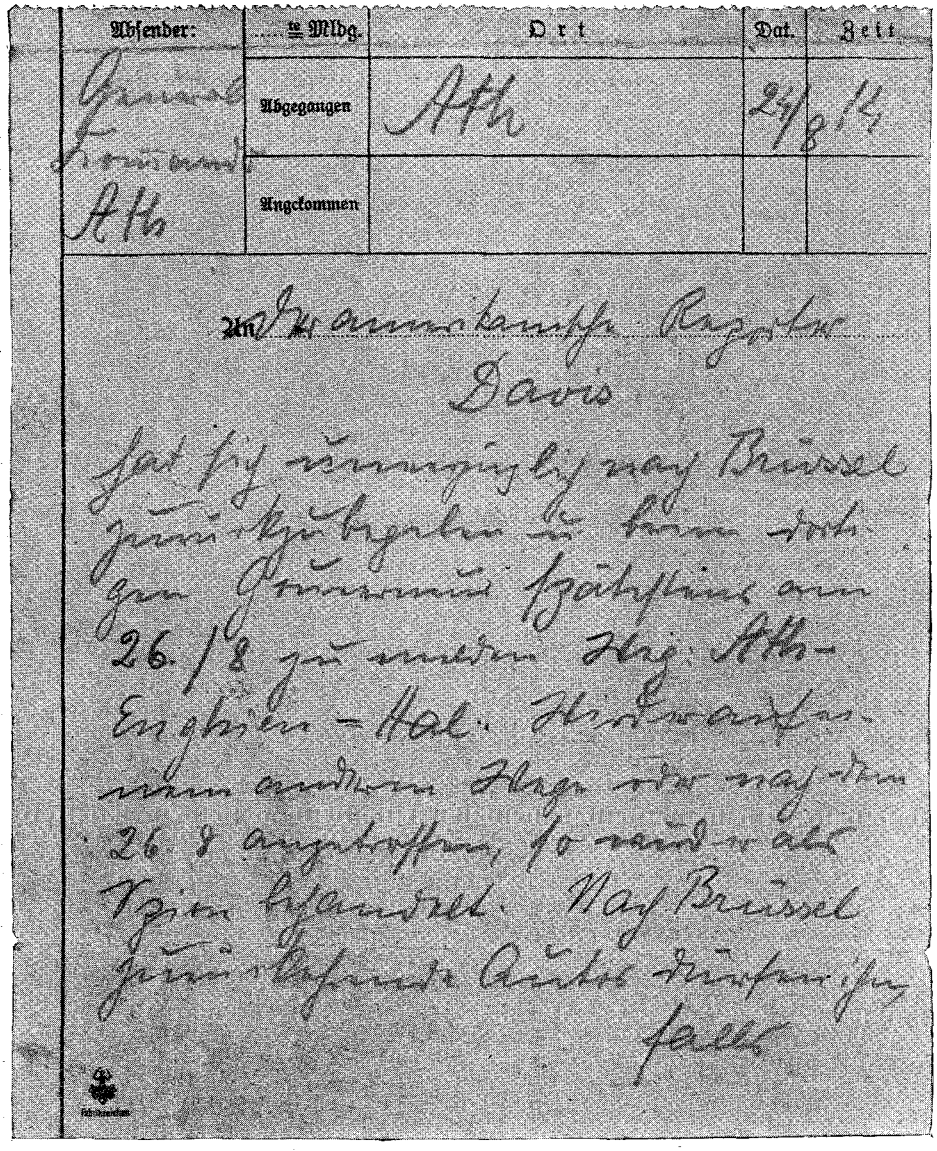

Mr. Davis's ticket of leave.

The pencil writing is the German "ticket of leave," requiring Mr. Davis to report in forty-eight hours or 'be as a spy treated.'

Flemish, not French. I was more afraid of them and their shotguns than of the Germans, and I never entered a village unless German soldiers were entering or leaving it. And the Germans gave me no reason to feel free from care. Every time they read my pass they were inclined to try me all over again, and twice searched my knapsack. After that happened the second time I guessed my letter to the President of France might prove a menace, and, tearing it into little pieces, dropped it over a bridge, and with regret watched that historical document from the ex-President of one republic to the President of another float down the Sambre toward the sea. By noon I decided I would not be able to make the distance. For twenty-four hours I had been without sleep or food, and I had

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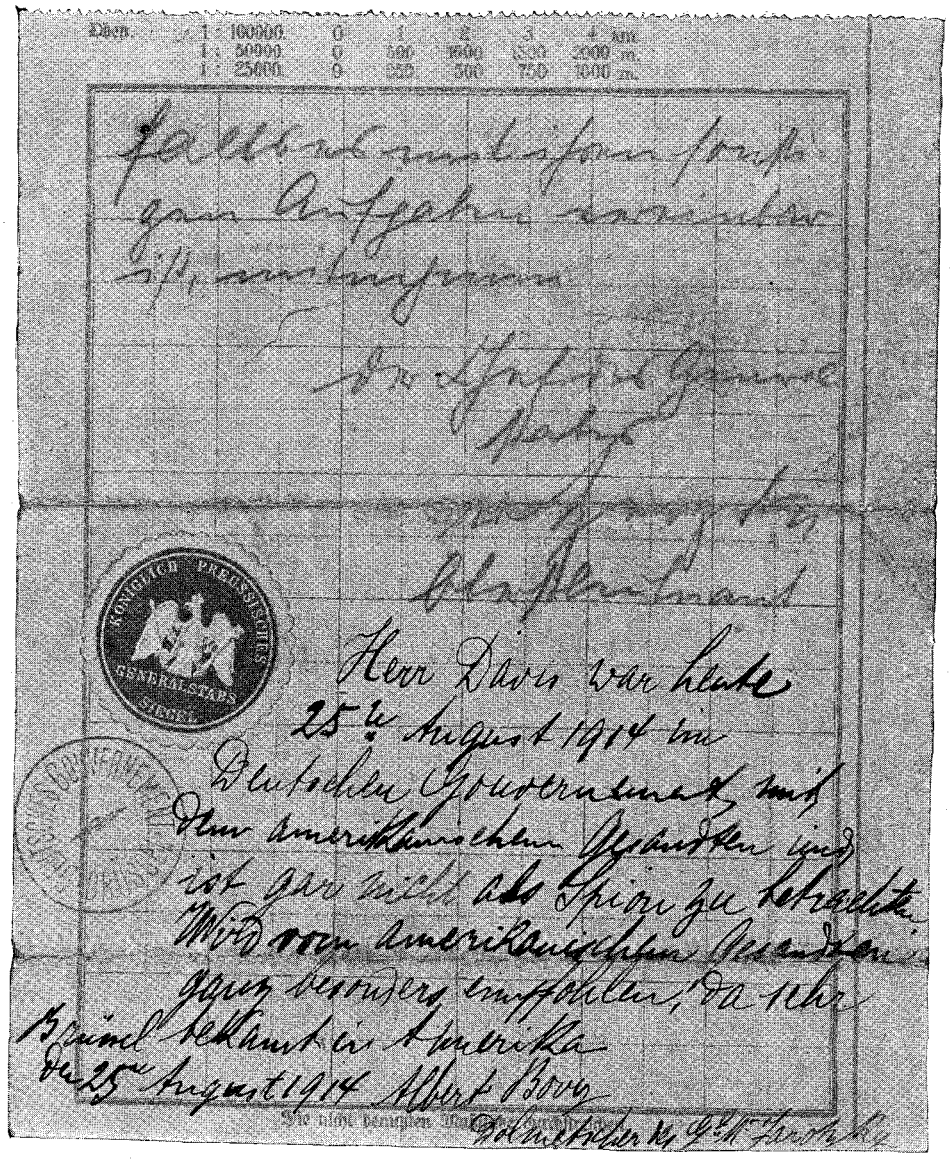

Reverse side of ticket of leave.

The ink writing (lower half) is the visé stating he is "not at all" to be treated as a spy.

been put through an unceasing third degree, and I was nearly out. Added to that, the chance of my losing the road was excellent; and if I lost the road the first German who read my pass was ordered by it to shoot me. So I decided to give myself up to the occupants of the next German car going toward Brussels and ask them to carry me there under arrest. I waited until an automobile approached, and then stood in front of it and held up my pass and pointed to the red seal. The car stopped, and the soldiers in front and the officer in the rear seat gazed at me in indignant amazement. The officer was a general, old and kindly looking, and, by the grace of Heaven, as slow-witted as he was kind. He spoke no English, and his French was as bad as mine, and in consequence he had no idea

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of what I was saying except that I had orders from the general staff to proceed at once to Brussels. I made a mystery of the pass, saying it was very confidential, but the red seal satisfied him. He bade me courteously to take the seat at his side, and with intense satisfaction I heard him command his orderly to get down and fetch my knapsack. The general was going, he said, only so far as Hal, but that far he would carry me. Hal was the last town named in my pass, and from Brussels only eleven miles distant. According to the schedule I had laid out for myself, I had not hoped to reach it by walking until the next day, but at the rate the car had approached I saw I would be there within two hours. My feelings when I sank back upon the cushions of that car and stretched out my weary legs and the wind whistled around us are too sacred for cold print. It was a situation I would not have used in fiction. I was a condemned spy, with the hand of every German properly against me, and yet under the protection of a German general, and in luxurious ease, I was escaping from them at forty miles an hour. I had but one regret. I wanted Rupert of Hentzau to see me. At Hal my luck still held. The steps of the Hôtel de Ville were crowded with generals. I thought never in the world could there be so many generals, so many flowing cloaks and spiked helmets. I was afraid of them. I was afraid that when my general abandoned me the others might not prove so slow-witted or so kind. My general also seemed to regard them with disfavor. He exclaimed impatiently. Apparently, to force his way through them, to cool his heels in an anteroom, did not appeal. It was long past his luncheon hour and the restaurant of the Palace Hotel called him. He gave a sharp order to the chauffeur.

"I go on to Brussels," he said. "Desire you to accompany me?" I did not know how to ask him in French not to make me laugh. I saw the great Palace of Justice that towers above the city with the same emotions that one beholds the Statue of Liberty, but not until we had reached the inner boulevards did I feel safe. There I bade my friend a grateful but hasty adieu, and in a taxi-cab, unwashed and unbrushed, I drove straight to the American legation. To Mr. Whitlock I told this story, and with one hand that gentleman reached for his hat and with the other for his stick. In the automobile of the legation we raced to the Hôtel de Ville. There Mr. Whitlock, as the moving-picture people say, "registered" indignation. Mr. Davis was present, he made it understood, not as a ticket-of-leave man, and because he had been ordered to report, but in spite of that fact. He was there as the friend of the American minister, and the word "Spion" must be removed from his papers.

And so, on the pass that Rupert gave me, below where he had written that I was to be treated as a spy, they wrote I was "not at all," "gar nicht," to be treated as a spy, and that I was well known to the American minister, and to that they affixed the official seal.*

That ended it, leaving me with one valuable possession. It is this: should any one suggest that I *am* a spy, or that I am *not* a friend of Brand Whitlock, I have the testimony of the Imperial German Government to the contrary.

*Literal translation of visé on the pass:

BRUSSELS, August 25, 1914.

Herr Davis was on the 25th of August at the headquarters of the German Government accompanied by the American minister and is not at all to be treated as a spy. He is highly recommended by the American minister and is well known in America.

ALBERT BOVEY,
Translator to Major-General Jarotsky.

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A PLAIN GIRL*

By H. C. Bunner

ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. ALLAN GILBERT

MOST of the novelists—at least, most of those novelists who deal in lustrous-eyed heroines, and in heroes running from "a little over the middle stature" to "six feet of manhood"—try to create the impression that the period of matrimonial engagement is a pleasant one. It isn't. It never was—at least, not to any properly constituted human beings. And why on earth should it be pleasant and to whom should it be pleasant? Let us take the case of the engagement of John Smith and Mary Jones. Their wedding-day is fixed. It is six months off, let us say. Now, do you expect John Smith to be happy? It is true that he has the promise of his heart's desire, but a promise is one thing and a certainty is another. The only certainty he has is that it will be six months sure and certain before he gets his heart's desire; and during those six months he has got to see his heart's desire every day, and to curse each day that comes along before the wedding-day. Also he has got to put in six months of solid reflection upon his own capabilities for supporting a wife, and possibly three or four younger persons.

And as for Mary Jones, her situation is even more uncomfortable. By all the laws of affection she is John's ownest own; and yet in reality she isn't anybody's own—not even her own self's own. Her parents have relinquished their claim to her just enough to enable them to go about looking as though she had deserted them in a snow-storm to run away with a disbeliever in revealed religion; and they keep enough authority over her to be as mean as conscientious parents can be whenever they get an opportunity. And few people can be meaner than a truly conscientious parent.

Here are presented a few of the facts which make the period of marital engagement anything but a happy time for the contracting parties. Any married couple who tell you that they had a good time when they were engaged either tell a sinful fib or prove that they are idiots of an extremely low organization; or else they are so old that they have forgotten all about it.

A young man—I do not vouch for the tale—who committed matrimony suddenly and without warning, showed that he had encountered a lady of experience by the excuse which he gave for his unconventional haste. "She said 'yes,'" he explained, "if I'd get a parson inside of one hour. 'Engagements,' she says, 'is mean.'"

But, if all engagements are mean, an engagement that is exceptionally and peculiarly mean among engagements must be a very mean thing indeed—and that is just what Tom Littleburgh thought of *his* engagement.

Perhaps an outsider might have thought Tom's engagement even meaner than Tom thought it; for an outsider might not have seen the charm that Tom saw in the young lady who was to be Mrs. Tom. Mary Leyden was undeniably a plain girl. She was not ugly in the least; in point of fact, she had no feature that was open to criticism; but as a friend of hers once remarked, summing up her case critically and æsthetically, as a good-looker Mary simply didn't get there. She was not by any means an unlovable girl; she was good and true and kind and intelligent and sensible; but in face and ways and manners she was just as plain as her plain Dutch name, and perhaps it was the Dutch blood in her that won Tom's heart, for it is a peculiar thing about the women of Holland that their attractiveness does not in the least depend upon their possession of handsome features. They have a wholesome, frank, amiable homeliness that is almost better than beauty, in a way, for

*An unpublished story recently found among the papers of H. C. Bunner. It was written for the series afterward collected as "More Short Sixes," and is dated August 24, 1894.

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you feel that you could see it around for a lifetime without getting tired of it.

However that may have been, Tom wanted nothing better than to see Mary's face around all his lifetime, and that was what made his engagement so miserable to him; for it lasted six months, and in all that time he only saw her for the space of twelve days, or, rather, for small fractional parts of the space of twelve days, and then under circumstances of an exasperating unpleasantness that will here be set forth.

Tom Littleburgh was an electrical engineer; and during the whole time of his engagement he was in charge of an important work of construction in a large town in New England. Mary Leyden was the only daughter of an ex-college professor who had given up his post for the more lucrative business of preparing young ladies for college.

It was in Florida in the winter-time that Tom had wooed and won Mary, and from the time that she said "yes" in January he had had no opportunity to see her until he managed to make a vacation for himself in August, when he arranged to see her at the ex-professor's summer home at Milford, Pa.—to see her there; not to stay at the house and have unlimited opportunities of talking with her and walking with her and gloating over her generally; for he had to stay at a hotel, the professor's house being full of young ladies in course of preparation for college.

Still, that was heaven enough for Tom. For twelve days—he had to lose a day coming and a day going—to see Mary, to look each day upon the plain face that lighted up for him with a love that was better than the best beauty in the world, was to Tom a dream of unspeakable delight. He had worked for it for months; he had thought of it by day and by night, and when the long-expected hour came, and he descended from the old-fashioned stage in front of the old-fashioned hotel, he was half-mad with the delightful anticipation. But, like all lovers, he thought first of his looks. As a matter of fact, it is only when two people are very much in love with each other that neither minds very much about the nice details of the other's appearance. When two people have been married for five or ten years it is most wise and desirable that they should take careful thought to the appearance which they present one to another; for about that time such things are liable to be noticed, but in the first flash of young love a girl may have a hat on crooked and a young man may have his hair mussed, and yet each may look beautiful exceedingly in the other's eyes even when everybody else is wondering what he can see in her or what she can see in him. And why not? Whose business is it, anyway, except theirs?

Tom went to his room at the hotel and put on summer clothes of great beauty and elegance. He brushed his hair and he tried to do something with his mustache, which did not happen to be a mustache that anything could be done with. Still, Tom surveyed it in the mirror as he tied his necktie, and was proud of it, and felt that, as far as his unworthy self could be prepared for presentation to his lady, he *was* prepared. And so he marched off up the street to the professor's house.

Every true lover's fancy outruns his journey to his appointed meeting. Tom had pictured to himself a quiet old-fashioned parlor with green blinds with the slats turned down and vases of flowers variously disposed around and Mary waiting for him in a delightful semi-obscurity, and a subsequent extinction of all the natural laws of time until they two had got through with what they had got to say to each other. Instead, he found his betrothed seated on the veranda of a very modern house in the company of seven other young ladies. She greeted him with a sincere but cool affection which was so strange and unexpected that it startled rather than depressed him. She let him take her a yard or two into the hall, where he kissed her in a hurried, ready-made, and generally unsatisfactory way, and then he found himself taken outside and introduced to all the seven girls. They were all young, they were all pretty: he didn't want any one of them, and he would have given the whole lot for Mary's little finger. But Mary not only took pains that he should know them all, but she went over their first names, which she seemed to consider an interesting catalogue, though they seemed to Tom nothing out of the usual thing in the way of

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young-womanish nomenclature. There were two Berties and a Gussie and an Annie and a Gladys—and there were others, much the same. And, as I have said, they were all pretty girls, but none of them was the plain girl whom Tom Littleburgh wished to see more than all the girls in the world.

And yet, somehow, before five minutes had passed, Tom found that he was paying an afternoon call on eight young ladies instead of upon one. There was no quiet, shady parlor with the golden sunlight just filtering through the half-closed blinds, no nice old horsehair sofa with a kind of sag-down in the middle that seemed to tumble two occupants together, no flowers, no romance, no nothing. There was a great sunlit porch, seven girls whom he didn't know, or want to know, and the beloved of his heart talking like all the rest of them on subjects he neither knew nor cared about. And so it went on until dinner-time came, and the ex-professor came in and Tom had to go back to the hotel, solitary male guests not being invited to join at feeding-time in the professor's dove-cot.

Tom . . . felt that, as far as his unworthy self could be prepared for presentation to his lady, he *was* prepared.—Page 716.

Tom called again after dinner, and found the whole household assembled in the parlor of his prospective father-in-law. They were at the piano. There was a book with green pasteboard covers on the piano, and from its faded pages they were singing, "Shall We Gather at the River?" and "Ye Evening Bells." Thus painfully passed the time until the professor arrived to give the signal for what he called retirement. As for Tom, he retired to his room and walked the floor until three o'clock in the morning. There was no man more amazed than he in the State of Pennsylvania, and there were few more indignant. He examined himself as to his conduct during his whole period of engagement and he could not find that he had been remiss in the smallest particular. Indeed, there was not much room for doubt about the matter. He had not seen his sweetheart since a week after the day on which she had given herself to him, and as far as his letters were concerned, he had not missed a day, and if each letter had not breathed a little more devotion than the preceding one it certainly had not been his fault. Tom's intellect might have been commonplace, but he knew that it had been conscientiously worked to the fullest extent from week to week in devising modes of telling

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Mary that he loved her a great deal more than anybody else had ever loved anybody else. And yet here was his first day at Milford gone and spent utterly; and he had had something like twenty-seven seconds' private conversation with Mary, and all the rest of the time he had had to share her society with seven Berties and Gussies and Annies, who might be as pretty as they pleased, but for whom he cared not a stiver.

The next morning Tom breakfasted early and hurried to the professor's house. He found Mary not alone, it is true, for she was superintending operations in a little spring-house dairy, but certainly much more like the old Mary than she had seemed the day before. In fact, she was so simple and sweet and natural in her manner, so seemingly unconscious of having tried him in any way, that Tom's spirit was wonderfully soothed, and yesterday's perplexity began to fade from his memory. For a half-hour he chatted with her while she directed the work of two pretty bare-armed maids, and when the work was done and Mary was free he followed her out into the sunshine in the confident belief that she was going to lead him to some favorite haunt near the bank of the little river, or under the great trees at the foot of the hill. She did nothing of the sort. She took him to a small classroom where Gussie and Annie and one of the Berties were studying and got him to correct Greek exercises all the rest of the morning.

It was with something like grim desperation that Tom asked her, as he left, to take a drive with him that afternoon; but when she cheerfully consented he brightened up and determined to get the narrowest buggy he could find. He got it and was at the professor's house promptly at two o'clock. Mary greeted him, placid, candid, unruffled, and told him in a most matter-of-fact way that she was very sorry indeed that she could not go with him, for one of the inmates of the household had been taken with sudden illness and required her attention. Furthermore, she asked if, since he had the horse and carriage, he would mind driving Gussie over to see her aunt at Dingman's Ferry. He drove Gussie to Dingman's Ferry. Gussie was a little thing with golden hair and bright blue eyes and a creamy complexion, but for all Tom noticed of her she might have been a red-headed mulatto. Gussie subsequently referred to him as "that silent gentleman who grinds his teeth while he drives."

The next day Tom committed the serious mistake of remonstrating with Mary. It sometimes pays to remonstrate with a woman, but not frequently, and *never* unless you know exactly what she is up to. Tom got nothing by his remonstrance except getting put in his place in a way which made him feel there was no getting out of it. He was reminded that Mary had her duties; he was asked if he desired her to neglect them, and he was accused of wounding a tender heart by a cruel suspicion born of the deepest selfishness. Then he had the satisfaction of knowing that he had made her cry, and altogether he felt like killing himself.

The days went on but the situation remained the same. If Tom saw Mary alone it was at some hour unsuitable for what the French call "expansions." It is difficult for the tender sentiment to expand while the object of a heart's devotion is washing teacups or putting whale-oil soap on rose-bushes. Of Gussie and Annie and both the Berties and the rest of "the preparatories," as they were called, he saw much more than he wanted to—so much, indeed, that much against his will he had to learn their names and their separate identities, and to distinguish one from the other. And never before, probably, were six really pretty girls so outrageously slighted by a young man of marriageable age. Tom tried his best to be civil, and even courteous, but after he had had ten days of acting as escort and cavalier in general to the whole seven he came to the conclusion that they were the most helpless set of young women he had ever encountered, and that perhaps Mary was not so much to blame as he had thought for her neglect. "They do seem," he admitted to himself, "to require more attention than any other girls I ever heard of. Why, I had to take that Bertie girl with a big hat down to the store to buy a piece of ribbon, and Gussie Thingumbob can't walk down the street after supper without having me to look after her. It's my opinion Mary has too much done for them. Let them alone and they'd be more self-reliant. Anyway, I don't

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Then he found himself taken outside and introduced to all the seven girls.—Page 716.

see why I should have to help to nuss 'em."

What with brooding over the fleeting days and his scanty allowance of Mary, Tom, who was generally good nature's self, began to grow surly, and his fair charges among themselves called him a "bear." It cannot be said that, except in one case, they minded much. They were all pretty. The town was full of "summery folk" and all had adorers enough, with perhaps a few to spare; and Tom was, at the best, that stupidest of things, a hopelessly engaged man.

The one case where Tom's increasing sullenness of manner produced an unpleasant effect was that of little Bessie Bailey, the youngest of the seven "preparatories" and the spoiled child of the household. But "spoiled child" is a very clumsy term to use as applied to little Bessie. The tenderness which had surrounded her from infancy had spoiled none of her sweetness and gentleness, and had only served to keep her in ignorance of the fact that there were such things as unkindness and unfriendliness in the world. She was a mere child at seventeen or eighteen, innocent, pretty, and so lovable and sweet of disposition that it is probable that the first human being who had ever looked upon her with unkindly eyes was good-natured Tom Littleburgh; and instead of his unkindness—to give it no harsher name—leaving her indifferent, as might have been expected, it stirred her to

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a deep and fervent indignation. It was the first slight the poor child had ever known, and her whole soul rose up against it. She was amazed and puzzled and mortified, and when a girl gets up as many emotions as that over a man, she is in a mighty near way of falling in love with him, and poor little Bessie Bailey was certainly losing her spirits because, for the first time in her young life, a man had been cool—perhaps a little more than cool—to her.

Poor Tom was not insensible to this state of affairs. In fact, Mary rebuked him for it herself.

"Since you must be thrown with the poor little thing, Tom, you might be just pleasant with her; it's only for a few days, you know."

"Yes, that's just it," said Tom desperately, "it is only for a few days—too confounded few days."

But Mary only left him with a rebuking smile to go about that endless chain of duties, and she had no sooner departed than the old professor stepped up and somewhat diffidently asked his young friend and son-in-law-to-be if he would not be so kind as to assist Miss Bessie Bailey in a difficult point in trigonometry.

"I hate, of course, to ask you to trouble yourself in your vacation-time, but I am in a very unpleasant predicament. Miss Trunkett, my mathematical teacher, is ill and cannot attend to her work, and I am no mathematician. Mary, of course, is able to help me out to some extent, but trigonometry is beyond poor Mary, and I fear, I greatly fear, I shall have to trespass on your kindness."

With murder in his heart Tom sought the stuffy class-room where he had passed the first morning after his arrival, and there sat Bessie and raised a pair of reproachful fawnlike eyes toward him from the great book with all its wearisome figures. Tom explained what he had been sent for and Bessie only said, "Oh!" in a tone that she might have used had he explained that he was the executioner; and they went to work.

But the lesson was long and hard and what Bessie called horrid, and Bessie was not bright about trigonometry and Bessie would play with her pencils. These things so rattled and irritated Tom that he made one final pull on his manhood and determined to be good and kind and patient and considerate even if he had to drop down dead when he got through with it.

And the worst of it was that he saw that Bessie saw just how matters stood. She saw that he was not a bear, she saw that he naturally was not gruff or rude or thoughtless of other people's feelings. She caught the kindly inflections of his natural voice whenever she did anything that deserved the least commendation, and once for ten or fifteen minutes they got to be quite friendly when Tom gave her a little rest and filled up the time by telling her something about himself and his work and his early struggles.

Now, Tom did not in the least mean to do this for any ulterior motive. He was not in the habit of talking about himself, and he was too simple-minded a fellow to know that, among men of the world, talking about one's self is a favorite way of making love. But he did see from Bessie's manner and her few shy speeches that he was getting himself into worse trouble than before. He saw that Bessie had wholly revised her judgment of him, and that as soon as he became conscious of conviction of error she began to rush to the other extreme and to accuse herself in her own mind of being a desperately wicked girl whose frivolity and stupidity and thoughtlessness must have been a great annoyance to this distinguished, high-minded, and earnest man whose knowledge and experience set him so many miles above her. The symptoms of emotion working in her young breast on her own account were patent to even unobservant Tom, and they irritated him the more that he could not help contrasting to himself the gentle submissiveness of this tender young nature with Mary's cold-blooded self-sufficiency. "Here's a girl," he said to himself, "who would manage to get some time out of twelve days to talk alone with a lover who had come hundreds of miles to see her." And as he thought thus he cast a side glance at Bessie and noticed really for the first time how very pretty she was. The lesson was resumed, but Bessie's attention wandered, Tom's conscience fidgeted, and finally, when he had occasion to look for a pencil in a hurry and found Bessie absent-mindedly stacking them up with the chalks and pens in the well of the inkstand, he ut-

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"My dear Miss Bailey—Bessie! I *can't* let them see you like this."

tered an exclamation of utter irritation—he never remembered exactly what it was, except that there was a damn in it somewhere—and before it was finished poor little Bessie was in a flood, a passion, an agony, of tears, sobbing, trembling, and wringing her hands.

Tom was unaccustomed to these expressions of feminine emotions, and they scared him, as he subsequently said, stiff; moreover, they opened the floodgates of his heart, and he felt as one might who in a passion had damned a baby. He tried his best to console her and quiet her, but with clumsy, ignorant, nervous efforts; and her paroxysms of grief only grew more violent as they grew more silent; for she seemed to be willing to render him any submission in her power. Her low murmurs of self-reproach and self-accusation, her extravagant appeals for pardon, and the oblivion of complete contempt—all these childish speeches stuck knives into his earnest, tender heart. And just then he heard the professor's heavy footfall coming deliberately down the long corridor. He looked about him in a frenzy.

"My dear Miss Bailey—Bessie! I *can't* let them see you like this. What the devil shall I do? Oh, here, come here, child!" And throwing his arm about the small form, he kicked open the one French window of the stuffy little room and bolted out with Bessie from the smell of ink and chalk and slates to where the moonlight shone on the garden at the back of the house with the orchard beyond it, and the glen and its whispering stream below.

Tom did not know what he was saying to Bessie when Mary found them half an hour later with the little girl's head pillowed on the big man's breast; but if she had wanted to she could have assured him that in all her experience as head teacher in an institution for preparing young ladies for college she had never seen a more pronounced case of moonstruck love-making.

Bessie fled with a shriek. Tom dropped

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"You saw," he said at last.

his hands by his side and stood looking doggedly at Mary, who gazed at him with a strange and inexplicable expression.

"You saw," he said at last.

"Yes," she said, "and oh, Tom, I am so happy"; and then she wound her arms around Tom's neck, laid her head about six inches above where Bessie's had been, and sighed with satisfaction, as only a true woman can sigh.

"Tom," she said, as he stood speechless, "do you remember when you asked me to marry you? You told me that you had never made love to any girl in your life. I knew that must be true, Tom, or you never would have been fool enough to say it. I am plain, Tom, but I'm proud, too. Now, for the rest of the time you're here, Tom, I sha'n't leave you one single moment from morning till night, and I'll try to make up, dear."

And she did.

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CRADLE SONG

By Josephine Preston Peabody

I

Lord Gabriel, wilt thou not rejoice
When at last a little boy's
  Cheek lies heavy as a rose,
    And his eyelids close?

Gabriel, when that hush may be,
This sweet hand all heedfully
  I'll undo, for thee alone,
    From his mother's own.

Then the far blue highways paven
With the burning stars of heaven
  He shall gladden with the sweet
    Hasting of his feet—

Feet so brightly bare and cool,
Leaping, as from pool to pool;
  From a little laughing boy
    Splashing rainbow joy!

Gabriel, wilt thou understand
How to keep his hovering hand?—
  Never shut, as in a bond
    From the bright beyond?—

Nay, but though it cling and close
Tightly as a climbing rose,
  Clasp it only so,—aright,
    Lest his heart take fright.

(*Dormi, dormi, tu:*
The dusk is hung with blue.)

II

Lord Michael, wilt not thou rejoice
When at last a little boy's
  Heart, a shut-in murmuring bee,
    Turns him unto thee?

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Wilt thou heed thine armor well,—
To take his hand from Gabriel
So his radiant cup of dream
May not spill a gleam?

He will take thy heart in thrall,
Telling o'er thy breastplate, all
Colors, in his bubbling speech,
With his hand to each.

(*Dormi, dormi tu.*
Sapphire is the blue;
Pearl and beryl, they are called,
Chrysoprase and emerald,
Sard and amethyst.
Numbered so, and kissed.)

Ah, but find some angel word
For thy sharp, subduing sword!
Yea, Lord Michael, make no doubt
He will find it out:

(*Dormi, dormi tu!*)
His eyes will look at you.

III

Last, a little morning space,
Lead him to that leafy place
Where Our Lady sits awake,
For all mothers' sake.

Bosomed with the Blessèd One,
He shall mind her of her Son,
Once so folded from all harms,
In her shrining arms.

(*In her veil of blue,*
Dormi, dormi tu.)

So;—and fare thee well.—
Softly,—Gabriel . . .
When the first faint red shall come,
Bid the Day-star lead him home,
For the bright World's sake,—
To my heart, awake.

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GERMANY EMBATTLED

AN AMERICAN INTERPRETATION

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

I

"A WONDERFUL quiet, certainty, and determination unto death are characteristic of all Germany to-day, and even with all the sorrow we are undergoing we deeply feel the greatness of these times. God bless our arms!" No other phrase that has crossed the ocean more completely states the German frame of mind when the mobilization was over and the empire could catch its breath and realize that by the most sudden, as well as the most violent, of convulsions the Germany and Europe of yesterday had gone forever—that the whole world had changed overnight.

The writer, a woman of rank and position, had but just parted, dry-eyed, from her husband and sixteen soldier relatives of a family which boasts of having had no civilians among its members since 1700. She had no word of regret; only a prayer that she might keep her self-control and be found worthy of a crisis which had revealed the entire nation so united and determined as to wipe out in a moment all differences of rank, religion, and party. To describe that hour of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice many a gifted writer and man of affairs has found himself utterly at a loss. The thrill and the uplift born of its whole-souled devotion wrenched every one loose from the purely personal considerations of life and exalted them with all the enthusiasm which comes from a readiness to die for a common cause. The psychology of the crowd was at its noblest height. Even the foreign spectators caught in the sudden swirl of vast, loosened reservoirs of national feeling found it impossible to observe, save with awe, conviction, and deep emotion, this profoundly impressive transformation of a people.

To the Germans their cause is just, their conscience clear. No such outburst of lofty enthusiasm for Kaiser and country would have been possible had there been anywhere as serious doubts as troubled, in England, Charles Trevelyan, Ramsay MacDonald, John Burns, and Lord Morley. As the facts were presented to the German people there seemed to be no question that their war-lord, who had kept the peace for the twenty-six years of his reign, had in this emergency stood for peace until the last moment, moving only when Russian perfidy compelled him to. It was necessary to strike first, even as a football team seeks to "get the jump" upon its opponents, for if Russia or France were to deliver a blow while German mobilization was under way and incomplete, the country would be in the position of a frigate raked in the sailing days by a broadside when "taken aback" and helpless. The public actually trembled lest the Kaiser hold off too long, and when he moved he seemed to them of Olympian stature. His language, bombastic as it may have appeared abroad, was pitched to the key-note of the hour; one heard for the first time praise of him as *unser lieber, guter Kaiser*. He stood for the whole people when he opened the war session of the Reichstag and, with his great sense of dramatic values, called upon its leaders to come forward and place their hands in his —even the socialists, whom he had dubbed traitors to the country in a speech at the Krupp works but a few years before. All this at the very moment that battalions in every town and city were marching, singing, to the front and Von Emmich's divisions, without waiting for siege-guns or reservists, were victoriously assaulting Liège.

With this profound belief in the righteousness of its cause, the nation went to war joyously exalted, wondering at itself and its power. Its leaders had hoped,

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they said, that the nation was strong and sound and firmly welded together in all classes by the bands of union forged under the stress of 1870–71. They knew it now to be true. They had not been sure that what is considered a decadent age had not affected the rugged virtues; that prosperity, material and scientific success, had not somewhat palsied the ability to think in terms of the nation. The wonderful response of the people filled all doubters with joy. Not only was it unnecessary to drive a single conscript to the ranks, but two millions of men who for one reason or another had escaped military service, or had passed beyond it by reason of age, volunteered, begging to be sent to the front. It is no wonder that the national motto, "*Gott Mit Uns*," was translated by Kaiser and people into that positive affirmation of the aid of the Deity which has so offended the world's onlookers.

Yet, when the nation gazed abroad in this moment of lofty exaltation and found that Italy, her ally, held back; that Belgium also flung herself into the struggle with absolute devotion in order to protect her territory; that England joined the enemies to east and west; that Japan, who had learned her military art from Germany, obeyed the orders of England to come to her rescue in the East; that the sentiment of the United States and other neutral nations was wholly against her—it was then that a feeling of absolute incredulity gave way to absolute anger. It was the English upon whom the waves of their wrath broke primarily. They had cut the cables connecting Germany with the outside world; they it was who spread abroad the false stories that Liège held out until August 17 and that the Germans were guilty of acts of brutality. It was England who told but half the story in her White Paper. It was England whose abstention from the war Sir Edward Grey had been ready to put up for German bidding until, driven into a corner, he refused to name his final price.

The English thus appeared before the German nation as traitorous to its civilization and culture, because its statesmen had so often described their people as "cousins across the Channel"; because there had existed the warmest cordiality and co-operation between the scientific and learned men of both countries; because they were of kindred racial stock and in their ideals nearer to one another than to France or Spain or to the Slavic power to the east. As the Germans analyzed the situation, their joint type of civilization was threatened with complete submergence by the brutal Russian forces which England had opposed at every turn since the Crimean war, against whose aspirations in the Near East the England of Gladstone had set itself like the Rock of Gibraltar; the Russia whose institutions are the exact opposite of those of liberal England; the hands of whose Romanoffs have reeked with the blood not only of its Jews but of all Russians who sought liberty. Whatever may have been the theories of the Bernhardis and the extreme militarists, the German people as a whole felt such a kinship to the British, with whom their royal family is so closely allied, that it was like a stab in the back from a brother when England declared war.

Did the English, all Germany asked, not comprehend that it was *their* battle which it was fighting? To Germany, Austria was well within her rights in sending the ultimatum; its language was no harsher than the circumstances warranted. In moving to revenge the archduke Austria did no more, as Ambassador von Bernstorff puts it, than the United States would have if emissaries of Huerta had murdered the vice-president of the United States. Russia should have allowed Austria to punish Servia, not only for the murder at Sarajevo, but for years of open anti-Austrian agitation bent on despoiling her of her provinces; that Russia moved proved to many a German that Russia herself was behind the Servian agitation; that Servia was merely the Czar's cat's-paw. When Russia acted Germany was compelled to follow for two reasons: her honor as an ally was as much involved as England's was engaged to France by the secret understanding, and she could not permit mobilization on her boundary, since her chief hope was to dispose of France before the Russian masses could be drawn up at her frontier. The possibility of war on two frontiers has never been lost sight of in Berlin; there has not been a day since 1880 that the German general staff

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has not studied and restudied its plan for defending the nation against a simultaneous French and Russian attack; there has not been a day during this period that the German army has not been confident of its ability to defeat both enemies. But to defeat them and England, too? It cannot be denied that for the moment even military Germany was staggered.

But only for a moment. Then, with a quick "the more enemies the more honor," the nation pressed on, easily persuading itself that the real issue behind it all was not only the Russian position—testified to in the White Paper by Sir Edward Grey—that Austrian domination of Servia would be intolerable to her, but Russian determination to undermine first Austria and then Germany for her own aggrandizement. For a few days the air was full of this cry of Slavic peril, that Germany stood alone against the Huns—as Western culture had once fought to keep the Turks out of Europe—until the question of Belgian neutrality thrust this into the background. That some Germans realize that her moral position would be far stronger to-day had she left Belgium untouched is deducible not merely from the chancellor's confession that she had violated a law of nations; it is admitted frankly by a few, like Professor Paul Natorp of the University of Marburg. Yet even he has convinced himself, like all Germany, that the French would have marched in with the consent of England and of Belgium itself if the Germans had not; they are the more certain of this now that the Germans have found the telltale papers in Brussels showing that the British were plotting with the Belgians what they should do if Belgium were invaded. That French troops and officers were actually crossing the boundaries when the Germans were, and that some were already in Liège, Namur, and Antwerp, is believed from one corner of Germany to another.

But, even if this were to be disproved, the Germans as a whole are behind the chancellor in his belief that to invade Belgium was justified by that direst necessity that knows no law. It was the only way to protect their own unfortified Belgian frontier. Why could not the Belgians have realized this and spared themselves all that they have suffered by letting the Germans march quietly through? The Kaiser's troops would have disturbed or injured no man; they would have made good any injury done and paid handsomely as they went. For the rest of the world to cry out against what happened as a result of Belgian folly, in the manner that it has, passeth understanding from their point of view. For England to protest seems to Germany the height of hypocrisy. England standing for the rights of small nations—the same England that wiped out the Boer republics; that consented shamefully to Russia's crushing out of Persia; that connived at France's swallowing of Morocco when the ink on the treaty of Algeciras guaranteeing Moroccan integrity was scarcely dry! Merely to state the case against "perfidious Albion" is to prove its shamelessness.

Hence the Germans have convinced themselves that England's seizing on Belgian neutrality as a reason for war was but the hollowest of shams. Everything that is now disclosed but proves in Berlin a long-planned conspiracy to ruin Germany because of her success in the world. It is envy that is at the bottom of it all, a wicked, criminal envy because German ships are filling the seas and German commerce is growing by leaps and bounds and her merchants are capturing the marts of trade hitherto the private property of John Bull. It is all so clear and plain that Germany could not understand why the rest of the world could not see it, too. "But wait," it cried, "until the German side gets out to the rest of the world, then its moral opinion will turn to our aid." Meanwhile, the question of Belgian neutrality went into the background like the Slavic peril; the stake was now the preserving of German *Kultur* (not culture, but civilization) from all the world, if need be.

II

GERMAN *Kultur!* What this means is the riddle of the hour to many who honestly seek to fathom the Teuton point of view. Is there a German "culture" or civilization superior to any other? And is that *Kultur* typified by autocratic Prussian militarism which slashes lame cobblers and bends the nation to its own im-

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perious will? Is it typified by the Kaiser in his war-lord moods, as when he bade the German troops departing for China to carve their way to Pekin with ferocity? "I have," he said, "to re-establish peace with the sword and take vengeance in a manner never before seen by the world. . . . The German flag has been insulted and the German Empire treated with contempt. This demands exemplary punishment and vengeance. . . . If you close with the enemy, remember this: Spare nobody. Make no prisoners. Use your weapons so that for a thousand years hence no Chinaman will dare look askance at any German. Open the way for civilization once more."

Or when he speaks of divine right, preaches the doctrine that might makes right, and denounces three millions of his countrymen as traitors because they wish to reconstitute the nation? Does it mean the Germany of the university professors like Treitschke, who demand not only that Germany shall have "her place in the sun" but that she shall aggressively fight for it; the professors who dream of over-sea dominion, of making Germany the Rome of the twentieth century, who are so certain of the superiority of what they consider German civilization as to be ready to impose it upon all the world?

Or does this word *Kultur* stand for that other Germany that all the world has come to love and praise, the Germany of kindliness and friendliness, of learned men to whom tens of thousands of Americans owe a never-ending gratitude; the Germany of poetry and music, with its rare love of nature; the Germany of humanitarian ideals that has led all the world in its efforts to solve social problems, elevated civic administration to the rank of a science and builded the city beautiful, while caring for its poor and its aged under laws all advanced nations are copying?

To Germany herself what her *Kultur* stands for is the spirit behind *both* of these divergent Germanys, but not that which produces autocratic or militarist excesses; for it signifies the supreme expression of its life as a nation—the youngest of nations. In its brief existence it has made more positive contributions to knowledge and world-advancement than any other nation in the same period. At all times *Kultur* stands for wonderful discipline not only in the army but in party, church, and state, together with equally marvellous efficiency. To this must be added an idealism amazing in a practical people which worships the expert and has wedded industry to science. On the one hand there is a deep, warm sentimentalism and on the other a union of minute knowledge and of comprehensive grasp of fundamental principles. Finally, there must not be denied as another component part a growing belief in the necessity and glory of armaments; a demand that their nation be allowed to play a part as a world power even as Spain and England in their times. Something of a composite like this it is which Germany is defending to-day as her contribution to civilization, as even more worthy of preservation than the precise framework of government under which her citizens live; for it men and women are giving freely of all that is most precious to them.

But as they give they suddenly find themselves portrayed as barbarians, as savages without reverence for the very things that play so deep a part in their lives, and they are aghast. How is it that they can be so misunderstood? Is all the world poisoned against them? Can such frightful lies triumph? They read them on every hand—the crassest falsities, chiefly from English sources, since London is not only the greatest financial exchange but the world's clearing-house for news. They, a united people, learn from the English press that the Kaiser had deliberately ordered every socialist member of the Reichstag shot; that socialist mobs were shot down in the streets of Berlin; that the people who rose in patriotic exaltation never equalled in modern times were driven unwillingly to the front! Their Kaiser, beloved by great multitudes, is portrayed as a wholesale murderer who plunged all Europe into bloody war when he could have prevented it; they themselves are pictured as slaves of a military cabal which plans the subjugation of France and England, the destruction of liberalism and the governing of Europe by an intolerable iron rule. They are told abroad that their soldiers are vandals who violate women, mutilate little children, murder in cold blood, and not merely des-

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troy private property but priceless works of art never to be replaced—the common heritage of mankind. In brief, they are accused of the very things of which they accuse, under oath, the invading Russians who in one East Prussian district alone are charged with three hundred and fifty murders of non-combatant men and women and children.

The world, they suddenly find, believes anything of them—of them who have gone forth to war in the spirit of the crusader, not hirelings, like the British regulars, but a most democratic army of the people, united with a new spirit of brotherliness to their comrades in the ranks from all walks in life, from princes to 'prentices. There are fathers and brothers, yes, grandfathers, in every regiment, men of years, position, title, learning, and high standing in every company, drawn together, not for plunder, not by lust of war, but to save their country, and all bound together by a discipline never approached by any other army. And of these it is said that they are like the Sioux Indians! Nothing to Germans could be worse than these slanders save what they themselves tell of the Belgians, of furies in skirts putting out with corkscrews the eyes of helpless German wounded and pouring boiling water upon them; of ununiformed citizens shooting out of cellars and from attic windows, and rising treacherously, as at Louvain, when led by priests and professors. Nothing surprises them more than that any one should look upon the burning of Louvain as else than a just punishment for acts directly contrary to the laws of war. When their own villages have been shot to pieces and burned by Russians without its creating an outcry in America, they cannot see why the burning of Belgian villages, the natural result of shelling troops out of them, should seem anything else than an ordinary incident of war, the hell that is war that they, under their Prussian generals, propose to make so terrible a hell by legitimate severity that their enemies will soon submit.

The fact that the Belgians lied to all the world about Liège, and similar misrepresentations, the Germans are ready to bear with as part of the game. But not the calumnies of their troops, as if they were Bulgarians or Serbs or Greek marauders. That is the last straw, and the head-lines, "*Wir Barbaren*," "*Wir Unmenschen*," now appearing in the German press over records of British and French prisoners' appreciation of their kindly treatment testify to the hurt inflicted. And so we have the German professors spurning their British decorations and academic honors, and the terrible prospect that between these two Teuton nations, which ought to be the best of friends, there will exist at the end of the war, whatever the outcome, a bitterness and a hatred beside which the latent hostility of French and Germans since 1870 will seem mere childish irritation. The Germans simply cannot understand when they hear that Englishmen of German names are changing them because, as in one recorded case, they say that the Germans have been carrying on war "contrary to every dictate of humanity."

Conscious of their rectitude, clear as to the injury done them, certain of the triumph of their arms, their faces are now turned to the neutrals, but particularly to the great North American republic where dwell so many of German birth. With German love of thoroughness and system they have formed committees for the purpose of presenting the truth abroad. They have showered every attention upon returning Americans in the passionate belief that they will be ambassadors of good will and reporters of the right. Citizens everywhere are besought for names of friends or relatives in America to whom literature may be sent, in full faith that the United States, so ill treated by Great Britain in 1776, 1812, and during the Civil War, will particularly express its horror at the policy which has sent against their *Kultur* hordes of black, brown, and yellow troops from Africa, India, and Asia.

III

It may, therefore, be about the hardest blow of all when Germany realizes that their representations of the facts as they see them, and their contentions, have from the first been freely printed in the American press, together with the views of Dernburg, Münsterberg, Francke, Von Jage-

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mann, Kühnemann, Burgess, Sloane, Ridder, Hexamer, and Ambassador Bernstorff, but that the American public as a whole continues unconvinced. The United States remains firm in its belief that the responsibility for this terrible misfortune which has overtaken humanity rests primarily with Austria and next with the Kaiser. "The final help," says the *London Times*, "is the mighty duty of America." What Germany, in its eagerness for that "final help," does not yet appreciate is that the unfavorable American judgment was based on consideration of the facts, and particularly of those relating to the invasion of Belgium. Our good opinion was forfeited by Germany when the Kaiser rejected Sir Edward Grey's offers to assure peace, when the "scrap-of-paper" incident occurred, and when the imperial chancellor exalted the law of necessity above the law of nations.

Berlin must learn that this judgment cannot be altered either by fuller appreciation of that thrilling uprising of the Kaiser's subjects or of their unanimous belief in the justice of their cause or of their readiness to die for it. There are plenty of American men and women who recall the wonderful rallying about Lincoln in 1861. "Who that saw it," wrote James Russell Lowell, "will ever forget that enthusiasm of loyalty for the flag, and for what the flag symbolized, which twenty-six years ago swept all the country's forces of thought and sentiment, of memory and hope, into the grasp of its overmastering torrent?" In France today we are witnessing a less-exploited but similarly moving uprising of the people, actuated by the profound belief that it is the very existence of France which is being fought for as well as the "giving to the whole world liberty to breathe, to think, to progress." But waves of national sentiment, however they may bring tears to the eyes and quicken the heart's beat, prove nothing in themselves.

The same is true of the question of the atrocities. If the United States did or did not believe all of them, or believed none of them—even if it approved and did not profoundly disapprove the dropping of bombs without warning into defenceless cities, the exacting of ransoms, the holding of unarmed citizens as hostages, the burning of cities in revenge for individual treachery—its final opinion would not be affected by the presence or absence of these horrible phases of war. War, it knows, lets loose every evil passion, inflicts every pain and torture known to man. But all of this, as thoughtful Germany must soon come to see, can have nothing whatever to do with the fundamental moral issues involved, the right and wrong of the struggle, any more than does the question of England's consistency or her attitude in the past toward the Boer republics, Persia, and Morocco, or our own "water-cure" torturing in the Philippines. Regret that the German name is at present under a cloud the United States will; but no amount of evidence that these accusations are slanderous will achieve the real purpose of the German propaganda in America—the turning of the United States against the Allies.

In the South African war American sympathies were chiefly with the Boers; in the Manchurian campaign overwhelmingly against Russia. If sentiment today favors the Allies it is plainly not because of any thick-and-thin friendship for England or for the Czar's despotic government. As a matter of fact, had France and England violated Belgian neutrality and entered Germany by her unfortified frontier, American public sentiment would have felt just as outraged by the wrong done by Frenchmen and Englishmen. The truth is that the German general staff knew that the easiest road into France lay through Belgium, and they took it. But one may pay too high a price even for the easiest road, and the price paid by Germany was war with Belgium, England, Japan, and perhaps Portugal, and the final forfeiture of public opinion everywhere. The laying waste of Belgium, be it a legitimate incident of war or not, has stirred the world to its utmost depths. Americans cannot but believe, as they pour out sympathy and aid to this stricken people, that it was wickedly unnecessary, and have, therefore, but restricted patience for German appeals.

The sober second thought in Germany, of which one finds traces in Professor Natorp's articles, can but reflect ere long upon the infinitely stronger position Germany would be in, even were the steps leading to

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the conflict the same, had it fought a defensive war. Many defeats will probably be necessary to shatter German faith in the divine wisdom of its general staff, whose officers had decided for years past that the best policy was that quick overwhelming of France which so nearly succeeded. The time must come, however, when Germans will wish with all their hearts that by keeping out of Belgium they had saved themselves three or four opponents and thereby held in some degree the sympathy of the United States. The position of the German and allied armies at this writing shows a truth we had begun to suspect by the close of our Civil War, that well-trained troops behind breastworks are a better means of defence than the best forts. No one can be found to believe that if Germany's soldier millions had merely lined their own frontiers and waged a defensive campaign behind forts, or trenches where there were no forts, France and Russia, fighting alone, could have made headway against her. The horrible losses of the raid into France would have been avoided and the control of the sea would indubitably be hers. There would have been no charges of vandalism or soldier misconduct to combat and to deplore. Plainly a Bismarck *was* needed, not only on the diplomatic side, but on the military side as well. Upon the general staff the blame for this utterly mistaken policy will eventually rest.

By this it is not meant to imply that even in this supposititious case Americans would have been altogether on the side of Germany. For all our recent imperialistic excursions into Central and South America and the Philippines, despite our dangerously large navy, the spirit of our people is still as opposed to great military establishment as in the first days of the Republic. As ex-President Eliot has put it: "The reliance on military force as the foundation of true national greatness seems to thinking Americans erroneous, and in the long run degrading to a Christian nation." It is probably true, as German speakers contend, that Bernhardi's book no more represents the real heart and mind of Germany than the vaporings of Congressman Hobson and the belligerent tracts of the pseudo-"Lieutenant-General" Homer Lea really reflect the sentiment of the common people of America. To accept the teachings of books like these is to admit that mankind is well along on its return to the stone age. But every military system produces men who worship war as war, believe it to be the normal state of man, and assert that there is no safety for any people but to make a soldier of every citizen. The German army has them in plenty, and, however democratic it may be in its ranks, it is controlled by a clique of professional soldiers who, standing quite apart from the aspirations of the plain people, have, as now appears, made great strides toward dominating the nobler Germany and giving to its foreign policy an aggressive jingo note. Victory now would enormously strengthen the hands of the Nietzsches, Treitschkes, and Bernhardis, with whom the crown prince seems in such complete sympathy. No one can deny this merely by asserting that this is not a war of the Kaiser but of the whole German people, or by pointing out that in the haste to serve the Fatherland the two Germanys are now as one. In war-time there is always the demand that all differences of opinion be sunk and consciences stifled.

No true friend of Germany in the United States can wish for her any success that will convince the masses of her people that true national greatness depends solely on military power. To do so means positive infidelity to our own institutions—and to humanity. If there are German-Americans or others who preach this doctrine that true national worth is measured by the relative perfection of a military machine and the number of battle-ships, they sojourn among us but are not of us. They are ignorant as to a chief teaching of the Republic; they are grossly untrue to the men of '48 who fled when the Prussian militarists blew to pieces that noble uprising and ended that brave if hopeless demand for true democracy. Whether the Germans, blinded by the *Sturm und Drang* they are now passing through, can perceive it or not, German victory would spell the strengthening of absolutism everywhere and of its bond-servant, militarism. It would mean the subordination of the nobler Germany to the reactionary. It would mean not a Germany to be beloved and honored of all thinking

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men, but a Germany to be feared and dreaded, with all liberal tendencies crushed within her. Her chief aspiration would then, perhaps, be fresh territories to conquer and certainly more and more sacrifices for the military machine. Against this possibility Americans must protest the louder the more they are indebted to Germany, the more they admire her, the more they pity her, the greater the anguish they feel that the very existence of this nation of Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Wagner, and all the rest of its really great men has been recklessly staked in a war utterly unnecessary, about whose real causes no man is clear. The more he loves Germany the more the real American must pray that she be saved from the dangerous forces within her which are threatening to overwhelm what is best in her. She must be shown that what is going on to-day is a denial of Christianity and nothing else. Her splendid abilities, her powers of organization, her sentiment, her idealism the world needs for the prevention of wars and not for the deification of the war spirit.

Americans who believe in self-government and democracy can take but one stand against absolutism and arbitrary power. They trust that as a result of this war thrones will everywhere come crashing to the ground. In Germany we must hope for a reawakening of the spirit of 1848 which will recognize at least wherein lies the great power of the United States in this hour. It rests not in the number of our battle-ships nor in the size of our army, but in our moral power: in the vigor of our democratic institutions, in the fact that this country loves justice, truth, and right; that the judgments of its common people are, in the long run, profoundly wise; that that judgment to-day is swayed neither by entangling alliances, nor by the lust of conquest, nor by the blasphemous doctrine that God is on the side of the largest battalions. If America is to-day, in this world crisis, the court of last instance, it is judging honestly on the facts and the facts alone.

Never was it so good to be an American!

THE UPPER SLOPES

By Margaret Sherwood

FERN-LIT the upper slopes with pale-green fire;
The paths shine in the sun;
I will go up to voice my youth's desire,
Though day is almost done.
Too long, alas! too long
In the low valley have I groped my way,
Forlorn of song,
A dalesman old and gray.
Now mist has fallen from my eyes, and I,—
Blind to the summits and the wind-swept flights
Of leaf and eagle,—see
Against the sky, the far-compelling heights
That beckon me.

They mock along my pathway, crying out
"You are too old to sing!
The chimney corner and the threshold stone
Are for the aged. Let young voices ring

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Across their elders' silence, till their shout
Makes youth's great triumph known."
Ah, but the young sing not! Their pointed shoes,
Their curling locks, the broidered clothes they wear,
Make up their care.
The sun-flecked streams serve but a mirror's use.
Late, at a cottage door, at eventide,
When starlight came,
Carolled an aged dame
Of life and love and death,
Of life outlasting breath,
Of great things that abide.
Counting their beads just purchased at the fair,
The young folk there
Smiled at the quavering voice and gave no heed.
Eyes that grow dim
Win to the vision that is sight indeed.
When walls of flesh grow thin
All life may enter in.
'Tis for the old whose eyes are spirit-clear
As Light draws near
That larger life to hymn.

Nay, I will go: ye shall not hold me back!
Ye who have kept me out
With faithless words of doubt
From my old heritage of faith and prayer,
And a diviner air.
Toiling in field or cot,
Ye, with bent backs, forgot
More is the life within than walls of lasting stone.
Your words that lack
All wisdom will I shut from out my ears.
Afar, my spirit hears
The mighty music of the still, small voice
That bids us all rejoice
In everlasting life. As choking dust
Have been the sayings ye have made me hear;
As mist across the eyes
Your long companionship. I will arise,
Toiling aloft to sing upon the peaks.
'Tis he who seeks
That findeth. Far-off heights draw near;
I climb them as I must.

Now, by the passion of all hearts that pray;
By all the longings, all the hopes that are

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As pleading, folded hands,
Lifted on high to One both near and far,
To One who understands;
By all the power that hath been the stay
Of tempted souls; by hours of comfort deep
For those who weep;
By old tried faiths and prayers that may not die,
Aloud I cry
They are but blind
Who say no spirit lives beyond the veil
Of things that faint and fail
Where in unceasing change our swift lives come and go.
Through me as in a tide
Old prayers now flow,
Old passions that abide,
And I, who know,
Cry: They are blind!

I, from these garden-plots with flowers sweet,
From out these meadows with their singing streams,
On halting, aged feet
Follow my dreams
Up the steep mountain path, where I may see
Before I die, the truth long granted me
In days of youth, and long forgot. I climb
Past green-flecked wall of stone, and bleating sheep,
Past beech-trunks gray with time,
My tryst to keep
With God and my own soul. I go to pray:
Grant to the young a hope to bind the hours,
A faith to build upon, nor let them stay
Forgetful, by the warm, sweet harvest flowers,
To lift their eyes on high,
Where sun-swept pastures meet the sky.

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A SIMPLE TALE

BY JOHN GALSWORTHY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY MCCARTER

TALKING of anti-Semitism one of those mornings, Ferrand said: "Yes, monsieur, plenty of those gentlemen in these days esteem themselves Christian, but I have only once met a Christian who esteemed himself a Jew. *C'était très drôle—je vais vous conter cela.*

"It was one autumn in London, and, the season being over, I was naturally in poverty, inhabiting a palace in Westminster at fourpence the night. In the next bed to me that time there was an old gentleman, so thin that one might truly say he was made of air. English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh—I shall never learn to distinguish those little differences in your race—but I well think he was English. Very feeble, very frail, white as paper, with a long gray beard, and caves in the cheeks, and speaking always softly, as if to a woman. . . . For me it was an experience to see an individual so gentle in a palace like that. His bed and bowl of broth he gained in sweeping out the kennels of all those sorts of types who come to sleep there every night. Here he spent all his day long, going out only at ten hours and a half every night, and returning at midnight less one quarter. Since I had not much to do, it was always a pleasure for me to talk with him; for though he was certainly a little *toqué*," and Ferrand tapped his temple, "he had great charm, of an old man, never thinking of himself, no more than a fly that turns in dancing all day beneath a ceiling. If there was something he could do for one of those specimens—to sew on a button, clean a pipe, catch beasts in their clothes, or sit to see their coats were not stolen, even to give up his place by the fire—he would always do it with his smile so white and gentle; and in his leisure he would read the Holy Book! He inspired in me a sort of affection—there are not so many old men so kind and gentle as that, even when they are 'cracked' as you call it. Several times I have caught him in washing the feet of one of those sots, or bathing some black eye or other, such as they often catch. A man of a spiritual refinement really remarkable—in clothes also so refined that one sometimes saw his skin. Though he had never great thing to say, he heard you like an angel, and spoke evil of no one. But, seeing that he had no more vigor than a swallow, it piqued me much how he would go out like that every night in all the weathers at the same hour for so long a promenade of the streets. When I interrogated him on this, he would only smile his smile of one not there, and did not seem to know very much of what I was talking. I said to myself: 'There is something here to see, if I am not mistaken. One of these good days, I shall be your guardian angel while you fly the night.' For I am a little connoisseur of strange things, monsieur, as you know; though, you may well imagine, walking the streets all day between two boards of a sacred sandwich does not give you too strong a desire to *flâner* in the evenings. *Eh, bien!* It was a night in late October that I at last pursued him. He was not difficult to follow, seeing he had no more guile than an egg; passing first at his walk of an old shadow into your St. James's Park along where your military types puff out their chests for the nursemaids to admire. Very slowly he went, leaning on a staff—*une canne de promenade* such as I have never seen, nearly six feet high, with an end like a shepherd's crook or the handle of a sword, a thing truly to make the *gamins* laugh; it made me smile—though I am not too well accustomed to mock at age and poverty—to watch him march in leaning on that cane. I remember that night—very beautiful, the sky of a clear dark, the stars as bright as they can ever be in these towns of our high civilization, and the leaf-shadows of the plane-trees,

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color of grapes on the pavement, so that one had not the heart to put foot on them. One of those evenings when the spirit is light, and policemen a little dreamy and well-wishing. Well, as I tell you, my Old marched, never looking behind him, like a man who walks in sleep. By that big church—which, like all those places, had its air of coldness, far and ungrateful among us others, little human creatures who have built it—he passed, into the great Eaton Square, whose houses ought well to be inhabited by people very rich. There he crossed to lean him against the railings of the garden in the centre, very tranquil, his long white beard falling over hands joined on his staff, in awaiting what —I could not figure to myself at all. It was the hour when your high *bourgeoisie* return from the theatre in their carriages, whose manikins sit, the arms crossed, before horses fat as snails. And one would see through the window some lady *bercée doucement*, with the face of one who has eaten too much and loved too little. And gentlemen passed me marching for a mouthful of fresh air, *très comme il faut*, their concertina hats pushed up, and nothing at all in their eyes. I remarked my Old, who, making no movement, watched them all as they went by; till presently a carriage stopped at a house nearly opposite. At once, then, he began to cross the road quickly, carrying his great stick. I observed the lackey pulling the bell and opening the carriage door, whence three people came forth: a man, a woman, a young man. Very high *bourgeoisie;* some judge, knight, mayor—what do I know? —with his wife and son, mounting under the porch. My Old had come to the bottom of the steps, and spoke, in bending himself forward, as if supplicating. At once those three turned their faces, very astonished. Although I was very intrigued, I could not hear what he was saying, for if I came nearer, I feared he would see me spying on him. Only the sound of his voice I heard, gentle as always; and I saw his hand wiping his forehead as though he had carried something heavy from very far. Then the lady spoke to her husband, and went into the house, and the young son followed in lighting a cigarette. There rested only that good father of the family, with his gray whiskers and nose a little bent, carrying an expression as if my Old were making him ridiculous. He made a quick gesture, as though he said: 'Go!' and he too filed softly. The door was shut. At once the lackey mounted, the carriage drove away, and all was as if it had never been, except that my Old was standing there, quite still. But soon he came returning, carrying his staff as if it burdened him. And recoiling in a porch to watch him pass, I saw his visage full of dolor, of one overwhelmed with fatigue and grief; so that I felt my heart squeeze me. I must well confess, monsieur, I was a little shocked to see this old sainted father asking as it seemed for alms. That is a thing I myself have never done, not even in the greatest poverty—one is not like your gentlemen—one does always some little thing for the money he receives, if it is only to show a drunken man where he lives. And I returned in meditating deeply over this problem, which well seemed to me fit for the angels to examine; and knowing what time my Old was always re-entering, I took care to be in my bed before him. He came in as ever, treading softly so as not to wake us others, and his face had again its serenity, a little 'cracked.' As you may well have remarked, monsieur, I am not one of those individuals who let everything grow under the nose without pulling them up to see how they are made. For me the greatest pleasure is to lift the skirts of life, to unveil what there is under the surface of things which are not always what they seem, as says your good little poet. For that one must have philosophy and a certain industry, lacking to all those gentlemen who think they alone are industrious because they sit in chairs and blow into the telephone, in filling their pockets with money. Myself, I coin knowledge of the heart—it is the only gold they cannot take from you. So that night I lay awake. I was not content with what I had seen; for I could not imagine why this old man, so unselfish, so like a saint in thinking ever of others, should go thus every night to beg, when he had always in this palace his bed, and that with which to keep his soul within his rags. Certainly we all have our vices, and gentlemen the most revered do, in secret, things they would cough to see others doing; but that business of begging

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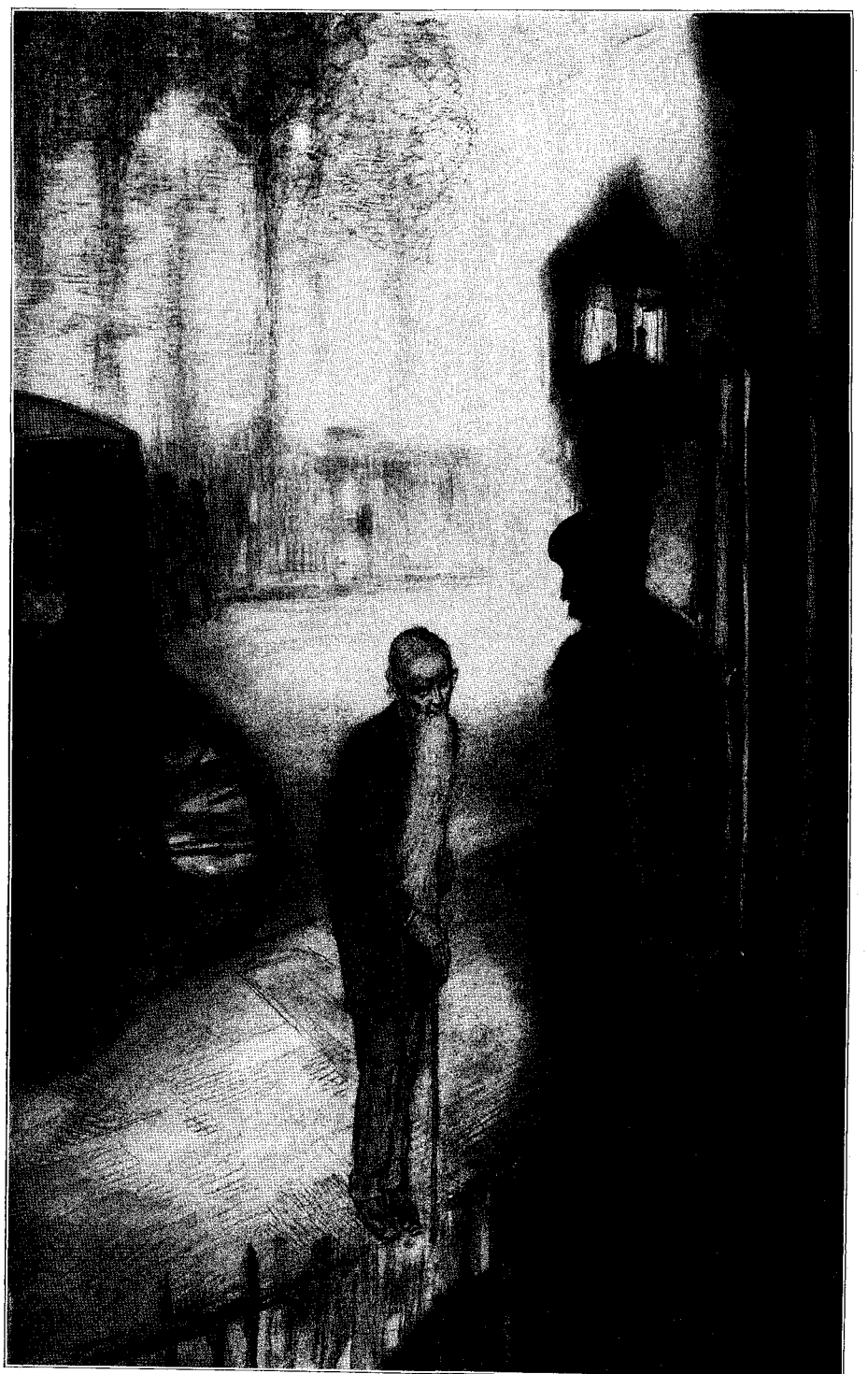

Drawn by Henry McCarter.

My Old had come to the bottom of the steps, and spoke, in bending himself forward, as if supplicating.
—Page 736.

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seemed scarcely in his character of an old altruist—for in my experience, monsieur, beggars are not less egoist than millionaires. As I say, it piqued me much, and I resolved to follow him again. The second night was of the most different. There was a great wind, and white clouds flying in the moonlight. He commenced his pilgrimage in passing by your House of Commons, as if toward the river. I like much that great river of yours. There is in its career something of very grand; it ought to know many things, although it is so silent, and gives to no one the secrets which are confided to it. He had for objective, it seemed, that long row of houses very respectable, which gives on the embankment, before you arrive at Chelsea. It was painful to see the poor Old, bending almost double against that great wind coming from the West. Not too many carriages down here, and few people—a true wilderness, lighted by tall lamps which threw no shadows, so clear was the moon. He took his part soon, as of the other night, standing on the far side of the road, watching for the return of some lion to his den. And presently I saw one coming, accompanied by three lionesses, all taller than himself. This one was bearded, and carried spectacles—a real head of learning; walking, too, with the step of a man who knows his world. Some professor—I said to myself—with his harem. They gained their house at fifty paces from my Old; and while this learned one was opening the door, the three ladies lifted their noses in looking at the moon. A little of æsthetic, a little of science—as always with that type there! At once I had perceived my Old coming across, blown in the wind like a gray stalk of thistle; and his face, with its expression of infinite pain as if carrying the sufferings of the world. At the moment they see him those three ladies drop their noses, and fly within the house as if he were the pestilence, in crying: 'Henry!' And out comes my monsieur again, in his beard and spectacles. For me, I would freely have given my ears to hear, but I saw that this good Henry had his eye on me, and I did not budge, for fear to seem in conspiracy. I heard him only say: 'Impossible! Impossible! Go to the proper place!' and he shut the door. My Old remained, with his long stick resting on a shoulder-bent as if it had the weight of lead. And presently he commenced to march again whence he had come, curved and trembling, the very shadow of a man, passing me, too, as if I were the air. That time also I regained my bed before him, in meditating very deeply, still more uncertain of the psychology of this affair, and resolved once again to follow him, saying to myself: 'This time I shall run all risks to hear.' There are two kinds of men in this world, monsieur, one who will not rest content till he has become master of all the toys that make a fat existence—in never looking to see of what they are made; and the other, for whom life is tobacco and a crust of bread and liberty to take all to pieces, so that his spirit may feel good within him. Frankly, I am of that kind. I rest never till I have found out why this is that—for me Mystery is the salt of life; and I must well eat of it. I put myself again then to following him the next night. This time he traversed those little dirty streets of your great Westminster, where all is mixed in a true pudding of lords and poor wretches at two sous the dozen; of cats and policemen; kerosene flames, abbeys, and the odor of fried fish. Ah! truly it is frightful to see your low streets in London; that gives me a conviction of hopelessness such as I have never caught elsewhere; piquant, too, to find them so near to that great House which sets example of good government to all the world. There is an irony so ferocious there, monsieur, that one can well hear the good God of your *bourgeois* laugh in every wheel that rolls, and in the cry of each cabbage that is sold; and see him smile in the smoky light of every flare, and in the candles of your great cathedral, while saying to himself: 'I have well made this world. Is there not variety here?—*en voilà une bonne soupe!*' This time, however, I attended my Old like his very shadow, and could hear him sighing as he marched, as if he also found the atmosphere of those streets too strong. But all of a sudden he turned a corner, and we were in the most quiet, most beautiful little street I have seen in all your London. It was of small, old, gray houses, very regular, which made as if they inclined themselves in their two rows before a great church at the end, gray in the moon-

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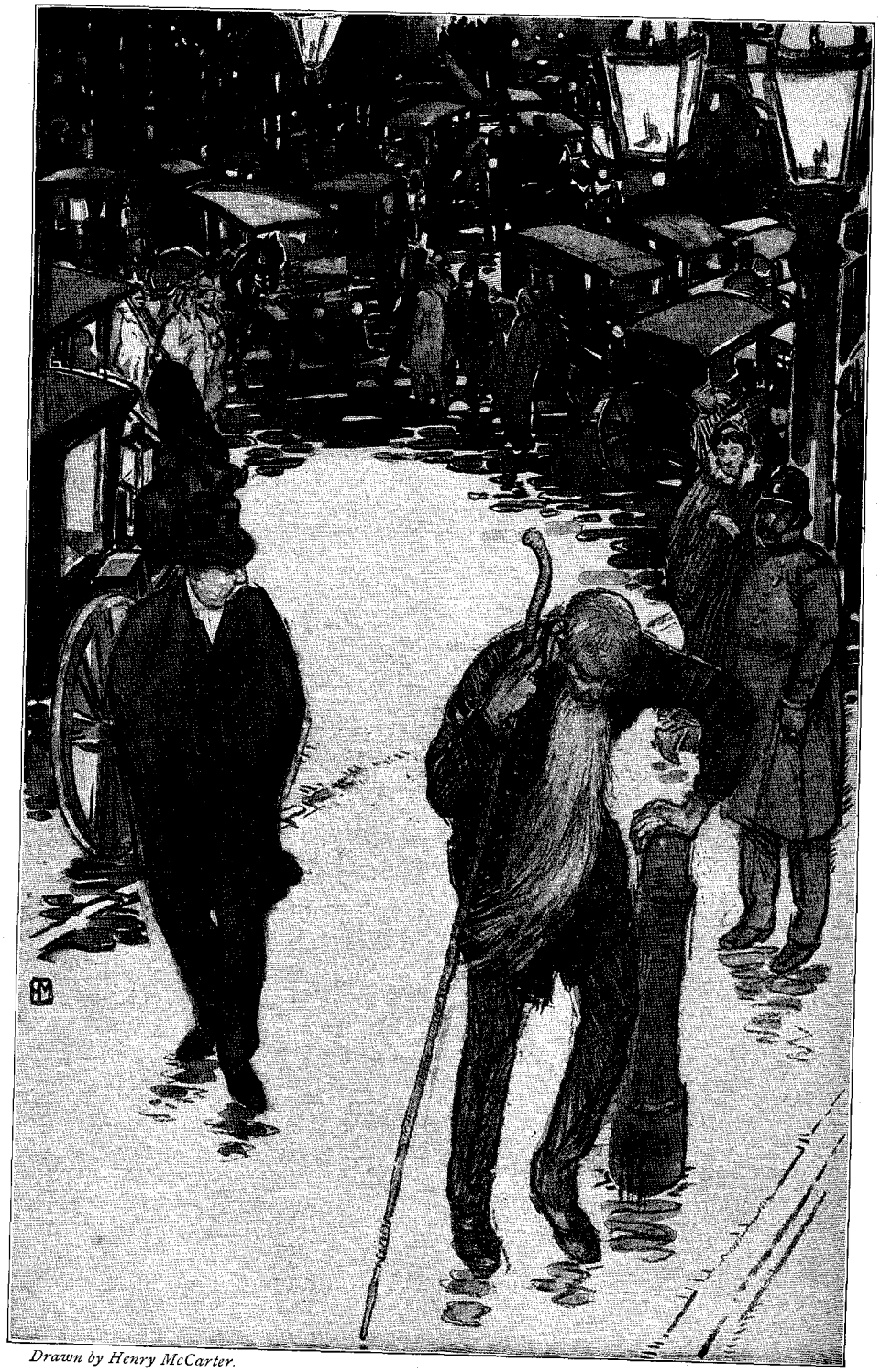

Drawn by Henry McCarter.

I could hear him sighing as he marched, as if he also found the atmosphere of those streets too strong.—Page 738.

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light, like a mother. There was no one in that street, and no more cover for me than hair on the head of a pope. But I had some confidence now that my Old would not remark me standing so close, since in these pilgrimages he seemed to remark nothing. Leaning on his staff, I tell you he had the air of an old bird in a desert, reposing on one leg by a dry pool, his soul looking for water. It gave me that notion one has sometimes in watching the rare spectacles of life—the sentiment that, according to me, pricks artists to their work. We had not stayed there too long before I saw a couple marching from the end of the street, and thought: 'Here they come to their nest!' Vigorous and gay they were, young married ones, eager to get home; one could see the white neck of the young wife, the white shirt of the young man, gleaming under their cloaks. I know them well, those young couples in great cities, without a care, taking all things, the world before them, *très amoureux*, without, as yet, children; jolly and pathetic, having life still to learn—which, believe me, monsieur, is a sad enough affair for nine rabbits out of ten. They stopped at the house next to where I stood; and since my Old was coming fast as always to the feast, I put myself at once to the appearance of ringing the bell of the house before me. This time I had well the chance of hearing. I could see, too, the faces of all three, because I have by now the habit of seeing out of the back hair. The pigeons were so anxious to get to their nest that my Old had only the time to speak, as they were in train to vanish, 'Sir, let me rest in your doorway!' Monsieur, I have never seen a face so hopeless, so cribbled with fatigue, yet so full of a gentle dignity, as that of my Old while he spoke those words. It was as if something looked from his visage that surpassed what belongs to us others, so mortal and so cynic as human life must well render all who dwell in this earthly Paradise. He held his long staff upon one shoulder, and I had the idea, sinister enough, that it was crushing his body of a spectre down into the pavement. I know not how the impression came, but it seemed to me that this devil of a stick had the nature of a heavy cross reposing on his shoulder; I had pain to prevent myself turning to find if in truth 'I had them' as your drunkards say. Then the young man called out: 'Here's a shilling for you, my friend!' But my Old did not budge, answering always: 'Sir, let me rest in your doorway!' As you may well imagine, monsieur, we were all in the silence of astonishment, I pulling away at my bell next door, which was not ringing, seeing I took care it did not; and those two young people regarding my Old with eyes round as moons, out of their pigeon-house, which I could well see was prettily feathered. Their hearts were making seesaw, I could tell; for at that age one is still impressionable. Then the girl put herself to whispering, and her husband said those two words of your young gentlemen: 'Awfully sorry!' and put out his hand, which held now a coin large as a saucer. But again my Old only said: 'Sir, let me rest in your doorway!' And the young man drew back his hand quickly as if he were ashamed, and saying again: 'Sorry!' he shut the door. I have heard many sighs in my time, they are the good little accompaniments to the song we sing to life, we who are in poverty; but the sigh my Old pushed then—how can I tell you—had an accent as if it came from Her, the faithful companion, who marches in holding the hands of men and women so that they may never make the grand mistake to imagine themselves for a moment the good God. Yes, monsieur, it was as if pushed by Suffering herself, that bird of the night, never tired of flying in this world where they talk always of cutting her wings. Then I took my resolution, and coming gently from behind, said: 'My Old—what is it? Can I do anything for you?' Without looking at me, he spoke as to himself: 'I shall never find one who will let me rest in his doorway. For my sin I shall wander forever!' At this moment, monsieur, there came to me an inspiration so clear that I marvelled I had not already had it a long time before. He thought himself the Wandering Jew. I had well found it. This was certainly his fixed idea, of a cracked old man! And I said: 'My Jew, do you know this? In doing what you do, you have become as Christ, in a world of wandering Jews!' But he did not seem to hear me, and only just as we arrived at our palace became again that old gentle being, thinking never of himself."

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Behind the smoke of his cigarette, a smile curled Ferrand's red lips under that long nose a little on one side.

"And, if you think of it, monsieur, it is well like that. Provided there is always that good man of a Wandering Jew, he will certainly have become as Christ, in all these centuries of being refused from door to door. Yes, yes, he must well have acquired charity the most profound that this world has ever seen, in watching the crushing virtue of others. All those gentry, of whom he asks night by night to let him rest in their doorways, they tell him where to go, how to *ménager* his life, even offer him money as I had seen; but, to let him rest, to trust him in their houses —this strange old man—as a fellow, a brother voyager—that they will not; it is hardly in the character of good citizens in a Christian country. And, as I have indicated to you, this Old of mine, cracked as he was, thinking himself the Jew who refused rest to the good Christ, had become, in being refused forever, the most Christian man I have ever encountered on this earth, which, according to me, is composed almost entirely of those who have themselves the character of the Wandering Jew."

Puffing out a sigh of smoke, Ferrand added: "I do not know whether he continued to pursue his idea, for I myself took the road next morning, and I have never seen him since."

A CHRISTMAS VISION

By John Kendrick Bangs

On Christmas Eve 'mid all the joyous glee
That in my plenteousness surrounded me,
I happened by some chance to turn mine eye
Out through a window-wreath that hung near by.
And as I glanced through it into the night
I seemed to see, lit by some holy light,
A childish face with wistful, smiling lips
That thrilled me to my very finger-tips.

Two eager hands stretched forth called, as in stress,
To me to carry help to Helplessness,
And in the sad eyes of that child I saw
In all its loveliness the Christmas Law—
Not a command, no everlasting must
Upon Reluctance for its teaching thrust,
But just a pleading hint to him who runs
That all who suffer are God's Little Ones!

And then the picture in the wreath was gone,
And in its place the Eastern Star-beams shone—
The same that nineteen centuries ago
Led on the Wisemen with their heavenly glow;
And e'en as they I wandered through the drifts
And into lowly places carried gifts
To cheer, and give release, and pay my due
Unto my Lord thro' them that suffer rue.

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UNDER THREE STEEPLES

By John Seymour Wood

ILLUSTRATIONS BY F. LUIS MORA

I

ST. PAUL'S CHAPEL

OLD St. Paul's Chapel turns its back disdainfully on noisy Broadway, not so much to administer unworldly reproof to the encroachments of business as to protect with its sheltering arms its trim old burial-ground, which is its pride. The value of the little God's acre has grown fabulous, but there are debts due to ancestors sleeping there which outweigh those to the living and to posterity. The old tombs will never be disturbed until the predicted general cataclysm arrives some day, which will hurl the sky-scrapers, towering on all sides, to their proper level.

Within its metes and bounds St. Paul's preserves its ancient state. Before its broad westward porch the path divides, and passes among the carefully preserved old headstones, in such a charming bit of garden that a visitor feels himself suddenly transported from New York's heart into the depths of some rare old English parish churchyard.

Fashion may have long since fled uptown, relegating piety to janitors' families, but it has left a congregation of ancient belles and beaux unwilling to desert their comfortable resting-places.

The girl always came to the churchyard to eat her luncheon on sunny days. She crept out of the office of men—dropped down the elevator crowded with men—pushed and elbowed her way along Broadway between men. Here men were not—above ground. In this quaint little shut-in oasis in the city she could dream her own dreams for an hour by herself, in her nooning, every pleasant day. There were some things that reminded her of the flowers blooming in the old burying-ground near her home in Virginia.

To-day she sat on an iron bench just within the shadow of the west portico, half-hidden from the noonday sun; she had eaten her luncheon—the three thin slices of bread and butter, the boiled egg, and the red apple—and had crumpled the brown paper in her hand preparatory to throwing it away. She was engaged in watching the sparrows—bold little jigs—who dared to hop on the hem of her skirt in their eagerness to partake of her crumbs. Along came two smartly dressed typewriters, then four more, laughing and chattering—and the sparrows flew off over the old graves, and perched merrily on an ancient tombstone, just over a skull and crossbones, to await further opportunity. She languidly turned her head, listening to what the girls were saying:

"Isn't it great! A wedding to-day! Just the nice, warm day for a wedding—though April is not the proper month. Mine, I hope, will be in June—but to-day is like June. St. Paul's is a dear old place at all times. It's to be a high-noon affair—and it won't be late, I hope, for that's bad luck, too."

The girl shrank back into her corner. A modern wedding! There were some, then, who still ventured down to old St. Paul's to be married and given in marriage? It seemed, somehow, a profanation. She mentally retreated a certain distance, resting the round chin of her pale eager face upon her thin patrician hand.

She had no heart for weddings—real weddings, real joyousness, real present happiness. But she quite enjoyed her pictures of the past—if they were *long* past—and dead and ended.

She could easily persuade herself that she saw the courtly young beaux in knee-breeches, and the dainty fair, in hoops and patches, coming out from church across the wide path of a Sunday morning in Washington's time—she saw the wigs and cocked hats, the powder and paste—she

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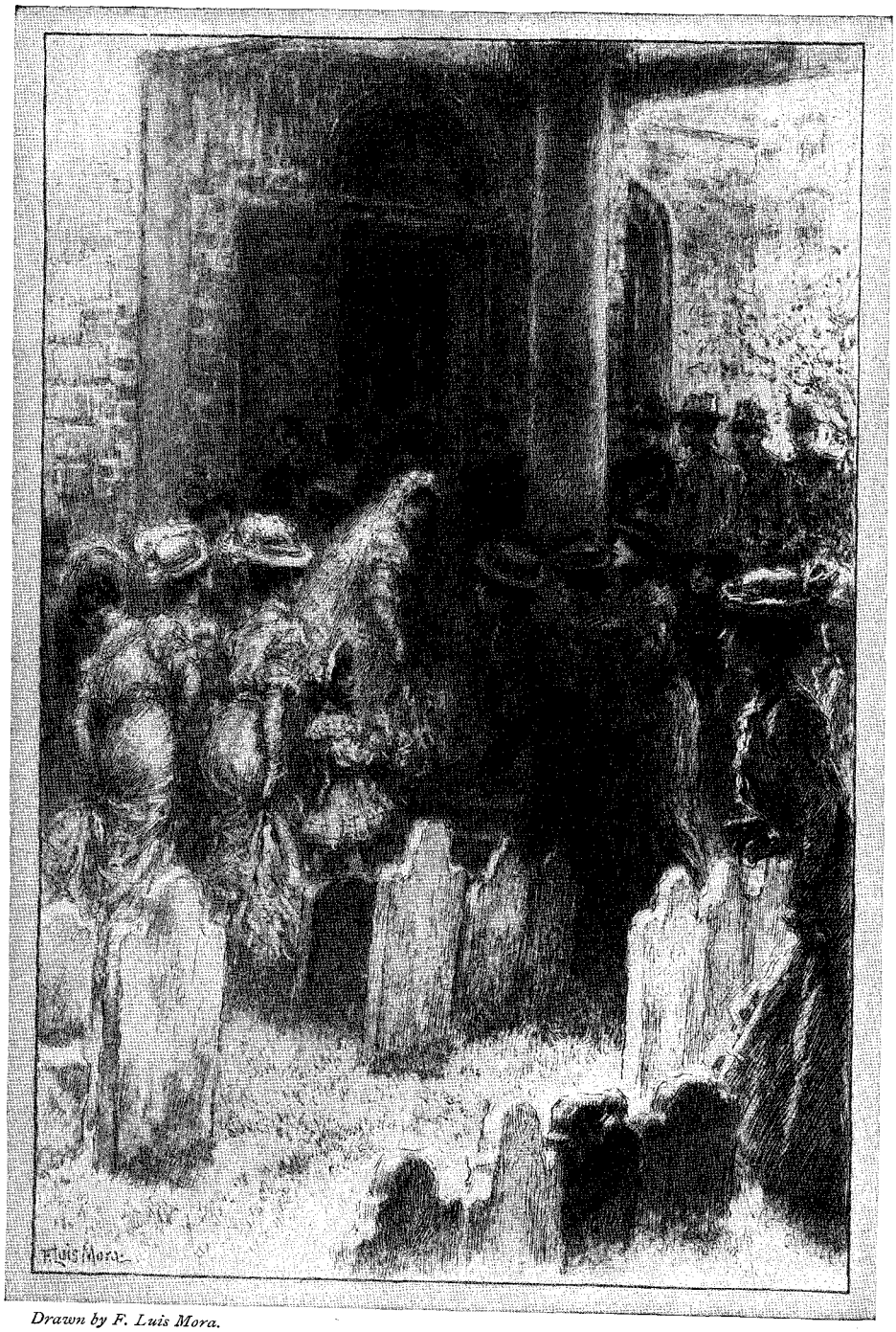

Drawn by F. Luis Mora.

The bride—such a charming young girl—so pretty, so young, blushing with excitement.—Page 744.

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pictured the funerals and weddings of the dandies of that day, and of the fine ladies—our great-grandmothers—doubtless many of them now lying out there under the genial sun, side by side, dust to dust, with such charming spring violets on their coats and corsages—still lending an indescribable air of perfumed gayety and pleasure to the spot, and giving the girl a sensation of being, but for an hour, with her own class—just a brief, noonday hour—her one vision of the day—it fed her starved, aristocratic, Virginian heart.

For at the time the girl was the victim of sudden catastrophe. The death of her brother, the bankrupt estate of her father, her absolute need of earning a salary on which to exist—these were hard, rude masters for a delicate Southerner, reared in comfort, and accustomed to some little luxury.

Masters to be mastered, however. She thanked her stars that she was of the new generation of girls trained to contemplate self-help without fear. To support herself and mother she braved the business world—put her brains to use for pay—endured occasional affronts—and wore a black veil to shield herself and lessen them.

But in the quiet churchyard the veil was lifted. A fair, pale, oval face appeared—a determined chin—large dark eyes, a lily neck. She had the delicate beauty of the primrose, but behind the beauty a purpose and will of steel.

Her fondness for St. Paul's was her last concession, she believed, to sentiment. The emotions she felt in the maelstrom of "down-town" were dying quietly within her. And why should not they be killed off? They were much in the way of good work. They were in the way of her progress, and she must grow hard, earn money, make progress, and succeed——

Quite a large party now approached—a dozen carriages drove up to the iron gateway on the north side. The bright little yard, already illuminated by the cheerful flowers, grew into the semblance of an agreeable garden party; there were nodding processions of flower-hats, sparkling girl faces, half-hid in ostrich plumes; then glowing young men in lavender gloves, with a subdued, usher manner, hove in sight. Fashionable old ladies chattered and laughed as they entered the church porch; a number of officers with swords clanked up the steps; in the far distance the strain of a regimental band gave a faint indication of a war at hand—some troops were marching between crowds to the ferry. A verger in black gown came along, looked at the girl, nodded, refrained magnanimously from asking her or the other girls to leave. But the janitor's children saw the wedding, their poor little dirty faces squeezed between palings of the great iron fence outside. It was not their day—*inside!*

The distant martial music above the roar of Broadway stirred the girl; they were playing "Dixie"—the officers, in their dark-blue and gold, secretly thrilled her also, but she shrank the closer into the corner of her iron seat. A lively military wedding, then? She tried to reason herself out of the feeling that they were all intruders in St. Paul's, and that she preferred the society of the agreeable dead! A stir and a tumult! Here came the bride! Now the girl forgot herself; she stood up excited. The bride—such a charming young girl—so pretty, so young, blushing with excitement—the bride had come on her portly father's arm. And the heart of the girl trembled, for she saw that the bride had stumbled on the threshold of the porch! There was the mother, breathless—the father, the sisters, the bridesmaids in flower-hats and pink—and the dearest little bit of a girl in the world, in roses and white lace—to lead the procession.

She heard some gayly dressed people saying: "For an improvisation, it's not so bad." Another: "Yes, they decided in two days, as his regiment was ordered off to Cuba." Another: "It makes the wedding so *much* more romantic and stunning—like 'Belgian Chivalry'—before Waterloo—the war——"

Then came a charming thing. The bride, as she entered the church aisle, catching sight of her and the other working girls in staring clusters, cried: "Ask them all in—*all!* Every one must be let in. I want them all to be happy—you poor dear girls!"

"Come, the bride invites you—you must obey!" cried a cheery, boyish voice above her; "allow me." She stole an upward glance at him, and took his arm. She named him to herself—"Cousin Fred"

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—others of the party, too, she named—Uncle Jack and Uncle Tom—Aunt Harriet, and Hatty, her daughter—Georgiana, tall and straight, in her huge feather-hat, smiling—Lizzie—Little Mary, the flower girl—and there was Grandma Burton, with a little silver trumpet at her ear, in the first pew, intent on missing no detail.

The wedding was a pretty show, before the great white altar, and the girl felt grateful. Some people were marked to be happy, it seemed, in this weary world. Others, if not she, were still ready to be amused and amusing. The groom was a tall young man in rough-rider uniform—his fine face full of gravity. St. Paul's bloomed with millinery and military (only the face of the groom seemed at all serious). But she had been at weddings before, and the men, she remembered, always appeared alarmed.

Once—just once—the bride, in her ecstasy of happiness on her husband's arm—he tall and strong and brass-buttoned—a little less grave as he swung down the aisle—gave her one quick eye-flash and a smile—all the essence of delirious joy—success, delight, pride, happiness, and heaven in that swift glance of blissful requited love!

It made the girl grow fearful and shrink back, abashed and half-afraid. She had hardly imagined such joy—*dangerous* joy—bringing only unutterable foreboding—it made her tremble and steal out of the old church and hurry away back to her office, holding her vision of merriment with distrust and doubt. Yet, outside, the sun shone fair, the little garden of old graves fairly sparkled—the janitor's children, reinforced by hundreds of street gamins, shouted and cheered; the bell—high up above—rang out with a fine old chastened and conventional, yet merry, tone. Worldly old church—worldly, but kindly—two old New York families, it seems, were united. Ring out, then, their marriage bells!—louder—louder—and drown out those muffled drums—that dismal regimental band—that had at last reached its ferry—and silence that croaking vulture of War and Death that is soaring high above the southern heavens, and is half-lost in the faint shadow of a rising storm-cloud. Ring out, merry wedding bells—and silence that ill-omened bird!

II

OLD TRINITY

A RAW, late November afternoon, one of those cold, gloomy, foggy, rainy, inexpressible days, when the hoarse whistles, up and down the two rivers, shriek more dismally—more voraciously—than ever with the growing darkness, and make it terrible, and the night comes up from the eastern sea thick and fast, with a huge shadow of cloud, and we are glad to look within and forget it.

From the girl's office window, high in her tower above the roofs, the thick, gathering mist and storm came out of the sea over a low-lying and almost stationary bank of fog, which clung to the river and along the wharves like a wet rag, and seemed unaffected by the great tempest above it. Night was riding in on a black horse, and, had not the girl's spirit loved a storm, the dismal tolling of Old Trinity's bell, and the occasional dash and scurry of rain against the window would have caused her some nervous feeling of dread. As it was, she was calmly cheerful, for her soul was lifted by the magnificent cloud display she had watched from her high tower since morning.

And still the bell of Old Trinity's steeple below her was tolling, in a slow, solemn voice. For what? Heard on the wind, it sounded up the deep canyon, loud, then soft, as if far away. Some one said it was for the funeral of a soldier—a soldier killed in battle. The papers had given the name, but she had not been made aware of it. She pressed her weary face against the window, listening. The hour of closing the office arrived—she put on her hat and coat in some excitement to go home. She descended to the street and found the tolling bell unendurable. Wall Street was blocked. It was impossible to cross. The military funeral was in progress, which, as the dirge of the band sounded along the narrow street, was drawing near to Trinity's portals. The band passed—then a row of officers on horseback, in long, mili-

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tary cloaks—hard, thin faces, set against the rain and wind—then a gun caisson jolting along, with the coffin draped with the flag, wet and bedraggled—some sunburned troopers, arms reversed—a squad of officers afoot—two or three carriages. A dismal procession, indeed, as it mounted the hill up the narrow defile of Wall Street, unusual, incongruous, and wet.

Meantime a silent, reverential crowd had gathered. The end of the day had emptied the vast buildings of hordes of clerks, lawyers, bankers, brokers, and girls, who poured out into the street and, stopped by the jam, waited for the procession to pass. As the flag-draped coffin was seen, a gentleman cried: "*Hats off!*" and off they came, in the rain, in deep, impressive silence, and amid the tears of the women.

The girl pressed forward to the edge of the curb, with staring eyes. Was it not "Cousin Fred" she saw on horseback? Her heart gave a bound—she steadied herself against a lamp-post. Above her Old Trinity loomed up into the darkness and mist, and very high in air the bell was still tolling—one—two—one—two—slowly—loud and soft—in the wind gusts. *Was* it "Cousin Fred?"

"Whose funeral is this?" she asked, breathless.

"Captain Burton, Rough Rider—killed in Cuba," replied a huge policeman.

"Let me pass—I knew him—I was at his wedding!" she cried, almost fiercely.

And they stood aside and let the slender girl push herself through the cordon of police, until she found herself on Trinity's porch, half-drenched in the rain. Here she stood, crowded behind soldiers, who were lifting a flag-draped coffin on their shoulders.

War was cruel—cruel—cruel!

To her Trinity seemed a magnificently splendid and devouring tomb—the body of the soldier carried into it for mocking burial. The girl fairly held her breath as she looked over her shoulder and fancied the graves behind the iron fence began to move, and "the dead began to dance." The fiends of Death and Storm were playing a mad game with Old Trinity! Its sedate, pious dignity seemed to her suddenly to have fled on the winds. She heard a grand, chaotic laughter of the fiends—and the vulture of War and Death gloating over another victim!

She entered the church and found herself carried into the main aisle, and heard the solemn tones of the organ reverberating among the high arches—saw the lights on the altar—found herself in a pew near the family—heard the awful words of the burial office—"*I know that my Redeemer liveth—and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*"—and then she knew no more until the *Gloria* at the end of the Psalm. Had she fainted? She hardly knew or cared—she was not interested in herself or her lapse of consciousness—oh, these poor, mourning friends! the poor, widowed bride!—and there up about the coffin of the "man that was born of woman, who had come up and had been cut down like a flower"—were those kindly people, her only "friends" in the vast friendless city—"Uncle Tom" and "Uncle Jack"—"Aunt Harriet," in deepest black—"Georgiana," tall and straight, "Lizzie," and even "Little Mary"—whose sobbing they could not seem to repress.

And there, next to "Grandma" Burton, the bride, silent and motionless, shrouded in long black veil. Yes, "Cousin Fred," too—his handsome head lowered—a pall of crape on his arm—how sorry she was for him, too!

She suffered with them, and knelt and prayed with them, remaining on her knees while Chopin's great funeral march, rocking the old church with its solemnity, carried them slowly out the great bronze doors of Trinity into the storm and wind and night.

Then she rose and went home in the subway crowd, colder, harder, more silent than usual. She had had all her own sorrows renewed—and she resented it—who were these people to her, after all?

"Oh, I'm glad I'm out of 'life'—I'm glad I'm buried in business," she said to herself. "What I've seen was one of life's contrasts more cruel with the grace and holiness of the church thrown over it. Life—I'll have none of it! I shall grow old and hard, and I'm glad I shall never know young love, or marriage, or bitter death. Business and hard work is so much better and kinder. . . .

"Let me be only efficient and punctual, O Lord—*and hard*, and worth my wage—and strong to work!"

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Drawn by F. Luis Mora.

Wall Street was blocked. It was impossible to cross.—Page 745.

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III

THE LITTLE CHURCH AROUND THE CORNER

IT was a bright, sunny day at the end of February, and the fresh snow lay a foot deep on the ground. Snow hung in heavy white mantles over the eaves of the Little Church Around the Corner, and almost buried it in its soft folds, as it did the many little dove-cots in the trees.

The statuette over the well wore a white hat and a beard a foot long. The cross above the lich-gate had entirely disappeared. The postern appeared like a frosted ornament on a Christmas cake. Old winter, hoar and sere, would seem to be gentle with the Little Church, folding soft white arms about it caressingly.

"Unpretentious," visitors say of it—not "low and lazy, nor broad and hazy, nor high and crazy"—just a good useful Little Church, well suited to the lonely girl and her life in the strange, unsocial city—and from the day she happened in and hid herself in a dark corner, she never deserted it.

Her boarding-house was not far away, and the girl came slowly out at the end of matins, with the last of the congregation, and stood a moment in the porch, hesitating about returning to her little cold hall-room. The sunlight on the snow nearly blinded her, and she retreated into the church. She had half-promised one of the curates to take a class in Sunday-school, and she looked for him now to talk with him about it. She felt that no meritorious sense of duty impelled her, but her Sundays were long and sadly tedious (since her mother had gone back to a relative in Virginia and left her alone), and she must distract herself in some way. She was always fond of boys—boys were so unsentimental—and so undemanding—she would take a class—they would amuse her.

As she stood pensively, half-leaning against the doorway, she noticed people beginning to gather at the font—a baby was to be christened. Carriages were ploughing through the mountains of snow and blocking the street. The busy curate came up and took her hand kindly:

"Quite a pathetic christening," he said; "the father was killed in Cuba, Captain Burton—a brave young officer. Poor fellow! He felt the call of his country! The child will get a good start on such a glorious winter's day. Can you wait until after the service, please?"—and he was off, without an answer.

Was she never to get away from that Burton wedding? What a whirligig time was! She half-closed her eyes and saw the wedding procession marching up the aisle of St. Paul's. Here again were "Uncle Jack and Uncle Tom"—"Aunt Harriet" in waving plumes—"Georgiana" in black and white—"Lizzie," and "Little Mary"—and the handsome best man—"Cousin Fred." She had only to open her eyes to see them once more, with a host of their friends, smiling and kindly.

She saw a pale, yet smiling, mother's face, in pathetic widow's veil—a mother proudly gazing upon a bundle of white lace and down, in the arms of his godmother. The proud eyes seemed to say: "His son, sir, his, who died for his country so gloriously."

The girl sank down in a pew and fell upon her knees, crying to herself: "These people seem like my own people—and yet I am barred from them—hid from them!"

The service ended, she heard them coming past her pew—the rustling silks, the half-subdued voices—the cry of the child—and the soothing, caressing responses of women, and she could feel them cuddling the little thing up to their necks and crying over him, and Grandma Burton talking excitedly to the rector about "my grandson, sir, my brave boy—I'm sure—I *know*—he's with us here!" And the girl felt lonelier than ever before. Her people! And they knew her not! And they would never know her! *Her* people, whom she had dreamed about and imagined, until she knew them, one by one, like old friends. "Cousin Fred," on whose arm she had laid her hand at the wedding—they knew her not—they would go out in the world again and leave her alone forever!

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Drawn by F. Luis Mora.

"It isn't as if we had just met, you know."—Page 750.

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The curate's deep voice broke into her tragic feeling of despair:

"Miss Dunbar, may I present Mr. Carstone?" The busy man, with this, hurried away—he was always in a hurry. She sat up stiffly, reddening, and hating herself for her tears.

The tall, straight, good-looking young fellow—not in khaki now—the one she had called "Cousin Fred"—beamed on her from the pew's end: "I'm awfully good on faces—used to them in the army, you know—I don't forget them," said he; "it's the same girl—at last I've found you!"

She tried to smile: "My brother used to say I have a chameleon face, changing with my environment——"

"I'm sure I had the honor of showing you a seat at my sister's wedding in St. Paul's—in that environment, I remember, it was a very charming face."

"I was present at St. Paul's—and—at Trinity, too—" she added sadly.

"I saw you—I saw you! I wondered about you—I—I've thought a lot about you——"

She bowed and rose to follow the curate, who was just then returned, into the Sunday-school room.

"Pray wait a moment and tell me—satisfy my curiosity—won't you?" he persisted.

"I must go—I have said I would take a class."

"If you're not the sister you're a near relative of poor dear Harry Dunbar—I see a striking likeness."

"You knew him?"

"In my class at Princeton," he replied eagerly—"the brightest man——"

"Don't," she whispered; "he was my brother."

She felt her gloved hand seized as in a vice, and Carstone turned aside to hide his face.

"I must go," she repeated sadly.

"Yes, I suppose you must—but, look here, Miss Dunbar—I—I——"

"I must say good morning, yet not without—not without telling you, Mr. Carstone, for that sweet girl-mother, that I know she is happy now—and I am glad—so glad—I have seen her married, and with her dead—and now——"

"Oh, my sister is very, very happy!"

"The blessed baby!" She had the Madonna's eyes as she said it.

He started forward, but she added hastily:

"Mr. Carstone, please say good-by—I'm a busy woman—I work for my living—I have to earn my bread. But for the last year—almost a year, now—I have kept that sweet wedding—that funeral of a soldier—hidden away in my heart. All your people I know—I have named them—yes, I feel I know them well."

"*Me?*"

"Yes—you are 'Cousin Fred'"—she looked down.

"Harold—my real name—" he laughed a hearty, boyish laugh.

"I prefer to go now—never to speak with you again—to keep you and yours as my own—my pictures"—she blushed and hesitated.

"By Jove! You can keep *me* as your own!" he laughed joyously, and as she walked, chin up, in a stately march down the aisle he hastened toward the door after his party.

Having seen his sister and the baby safe at home, the impetuous fellow was back again by the time Sunday-school was over and persuading the girl that he must not be forbidden to accompany her to her boarding-house home, and that she must take his arm, just as she did at the wedding, lest she slip and fall in the snow.

"And my sister insists that you let me bring you around to dine with us—we are to have a sort of christening dinner—and—and——"

She looked up into his eyes, amused.

"Oh, hang it!" he cried; "I guess Harry's sister and Harry's old chum understand each other, don't we? It isn't as if we had just met, you know—I have known you a year."

She felt her hand tightly pressed against his strong arm.

And suddenly it seemed as if they were not in the Little Church at all—but in Paradise.

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ELMIRA AND FOUR-THIRTEEN

By Algernon Tassin

THERE are two sides to everything. Even to listening at a keyhole.

Nevertheless, Elmira found herself for a moment at loss for words when the door of Number 413 flew open and its occupant stood before her as glowering and terrible as it is possible for a vague little man with banana-colored hair to look.

"Oh, sir!" she stammered. "Oh, sir! I——"

The little man's arm shot out with surprising decision, and his hand seized her with surprising force and pulled her into the room.

He closed the door and faced her, blazing with wrath. "What were you doing there?"

"I just wanted to see if I could make up your room, sir," stammered Elmira.

"Is that the way you generally see?" he shouted in a high treble. "Why didn't you knock?"

"I—I was afraid of disturbing you, sir. If you hadn't got up yet."

"At eleven o'clock!" he snorted scornfully. "That's likely."

But Elmira was beginning to pluck up spirit.

"I've been knocking since nine, sir." Her keen eyes flickered over his face. "When did you get up, sir?"

"I—that's none of your business!"

"No, sir," retorted Elmira tartly. Nothing was further from her purpose than to lose her temper. Besides, she felt she hadn't any right to lose it under the circumstance. But she felt it going. "It is my business to make up the room, though."

"Well, you see it's made up!" he snapped.

"So I see, sir," Elmira assented coolly.

She gazed at him in an inquiring pause which she meant to make as uncomfortable as possible. Long years as a hotel chambermaid had taught her this was the most effective weapon in her sadly limited armory. Her application of it both for offence and defence, and for extraction, might be called scientific.

"I—I got up early and as I didn't intend to go out for some time, I made the bed myself."

Her gaze travelled to the bed and back to him again. "And where did you learn, sir, to fold over the end of the sheet in that disgusting way?"

Somewhat startled, he seemed feebly to grope for the drift of her remark. "What do you mean?"

"Sure, look here," she said cheerfully. She lifted the upper end of the top sheet and showed him that it had been turned over diagonally before being tucked in. "You see, sir, kitty-cornered."

"It must have got caught of itself," muttered the man, discomfited.

"Hm!" said Elmira pointedly. "The rest of the bed you make very well indeed, sir." Her tone was within obvious distance of irony. She wanted him to recognize it in order to feel to the full the uncomfortableness of the ensuing pause. Then her eyes travelled significantly to the large chair by the window and back again to his face. "Ain't you been out yet?"

"No," said he shortly.

There was a sharp maternal reproof in her voice. "You got up early and ain't had any breakfast yet?"

"Yes, I—I had the boy bring it up."

"What did you have?"

He paused. "I had coffee and toast and some ham and eggs."

"Which boy?"

Her manner had the gathering triumph of a cross-examiner reducing his witness to pulp.

"That's none of your business," said he with weak bluster.

"There ain't any of the boys been up here this morning." Elmira intimated distinctly that the episode was closed.

The man made an ineffective attempt to show that he didn't care. "Oh, of course—if you know all about it!"

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Elmira tossed her head at his transparent tactics. "Ain't I on the floor all the time, coming and going? Besides, if you want to know, I've been here several times to see if you were up."

The man darted her a scared look. "To see in the same way, I suppose." He jerked his head toward the door.

"What was I going to do when you didn't answer me knocking?"

"What did you see?"

"I saw you always sitting in that chair."

"That's nice!" he stammered with futile sarcasm. But his relief was plainly visible. "They'd like to know that at the office."

"There are other things they'd like to know at the office," said Elmira.

The man moved his head from side to side in an aimless way, as if he were unconsciously seeking some means of escape. But in a moment he rallied and strode toward her furiously. "I've had enough of your spying!" he whipped out in his angry treble.

But Elmira stood her ground. She was angular and competent, and, moreover, she was some inches taller than he. He may have seen that if he laid hands upon her prepared, he might not eject her from the room as easily as he had hauled her unexpectedly into it. Or he may have been struck by something in her face as she eyed him steadily. At any rate he stopped.

"What was it made you do it?" he said timidly.

"The three days you've been here, you've been getting more reckless every day. The first night you never undressed. Just threw yourself down—and there's where your shoes dirtied the spread. All the same when you got up in the morning, you turned the bedclothes over the foot—like a nice, home-keeping man that had learned it from his mother. But the under sheet was as smooth as when I put it on. You can't lay on those disgustingly starched sheets without their showing every pucker. The second morning, you just gave the clothes a yank to tumble them up every which way and make it look as if you had been to bed. But I should judge that you haven't even laid down. Anyway, you hadn't gone to bed, because I'd kitty-cornered that sheet, and the fold hadn't come undone. The third morning, which is now, you didn't even try to mizzle me. You forgot all about it until I came in, and then you remembered it and lied to me. Of course any man's got a right to lie when he's paying the bills, and I don't mind that. What I do mind is your getting more reckless every day. To-morrow morning—" She stopped significantly.

"Well," said he fiercely, "what about to-morrow morning?"

Elmira paused thoughtfully. Her pause was a genuine one this time, and not adopted solely for the purpose of making him uncomfortable. The case presented many contradictory features, and she felt instinctively that it would repay diplomacy.

"Well," she began, "I've got a lot to say about to-morrow morning, and some of it's real interesting. I'll tell you if you go down-stairs and have some coffee and toast and ham and eggs."

"What about to-morrow morning?"

"There ain't any use talking to a hungry man."

"Hungry?" He made a gesture of disgust. "I couldn't eat anything."

"Well," agreed Elmira soothingly, "perhaps you can't. But you never know what you can't eat till you've smelled it. You go down and have a whiff of some steaming hot coffee, and some red ham and two yellow-and-white fried eggs, with ham-juice streaking over them. And then you just do the best you can."

"All right," said the man. His promptitude seemed to surprise himself as much as it gratified her. His short-lived truculence had departed, and instead he exhibited an almost eager docility—as if he were glad to be taking orders. In the doorway he turned with humble entreaty. "You won't touch any of these things while I'm gone?"

"No," said Elmira reassuringly. "I won't."

When she was satisfied that he had got into the elevator, she went to the bureau and opened the drawers, one after the other. They were all empty but the bottom one, and that was locked. Elmira removed the third drawer and swept her hand in a gingerly way through the

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fourth one. When she touched what she expected, she withdrew it with a start.

"Ain't he the simp!" she said aloud. But she said it with a great deal of puzzled gentleness. The picture of the vague wistful face bending over the revolver and examining it with a sort of unthinking intentness, as she had seen it framed in the keyhole, was very fresh in her mind.

She put back the third drawer, and, stepping carefully, went to the chair by the window. How should she manage? Should she report at the office that Four-Thirteen was acting queer, and she had seen him handling a revolver? At the most they would only make him leave the hotel. He would pack up all these things he had bought since he came—he didn't seem to have brought anything with him—and go somewhere else, and when the time came, accomplish his purpose just the same.

Many years of service at the hotel had converted Elmira into an impersonal though acute observer of the passing show. People came and went making no individual appeal whatever. If she had seemed to any of them sympathetic, it was merely part of the business of acquiring a tip. She performed it as automatically as she did the rest of her routine. Long ago, when she was younger, Elmira had found it necessary to steel a romantic nature against casual encroachments. Sympathy paid no more than disguised indifference, sometimes less; and it came to nothing but regret in the end. If she had locked her heart, however, she had only opened more widely the windows of an inquiring mind. She marked every coming and going in the endless procession of guests with a mathematical and speculative eye. To build up generalizations out of trifles had become the passion of her practiced mind. When the trifles were lacking, she had learned how to extract them by minute and delicate devices. Listening at keyholes was crude as well as illegitimate and awkward, and she had condescended to it this time only because she deemed it her professional duty. It was not only humiliating but disparaging to have anything unpleasant happening unexpectedly in one of your rooms. It gave a girl a bad name at the office. Furthermore, this present Four-Thirteen had not only challenged her best intellectual endeavors, but had faintly called from afar to her romantic nature locked up in its steely chamber. She felt, reluctantly, a personal yielding to any one so vague and helpless. He appealed to her maternal instinct, and made her want to do something for him—in spite of experience. And curiosity dictated likewise. If she drove him to another hotel she would never, except for such commonplace outlines as might appear in a newspaper item, know his history. About this she had a consuming desire. It had been burning more steadily each hour of his stay. Never, in a life notable for its constant output of intellectual curiosity, had Elmira surveyed with less detachment any figure in the endless procession of guests she had marked come and go with an inquiring eye.

Half a dozen times during the first day he had gone forth and returned with a package. She had seen him carrying them through the hall. Some of them were boxed, and some were bumpy, and some were so large or inconvenient you would have thought they would be delivered. At first she had thought nothing of this. But when she had found the next morning that all the packages had been undone, the papers neatly folded, each with its careful circlet of string, and the boxes piled one upon the other in a neat pile; that they had all contained toys, and that these toys had all been put together and set up as if for demonstration to a child, and ranged in orderly fashion about the floor—Elmira had scented an occasion. When she had made her discovery about the bed she was sure of it. A man who buys toys by the armful and who sits up worrying, presented a piquant and unusual combination.

On the second morning she had pounced upon the proof of another sleepless night, and speculated upon another mushroom growth of papers and boxes. The toys they had contained were set out with the others upon the floor. In a circle around the chair at the window was laid out a railroad, and on it was a mechanical locomotive with a train of cars. Through the keyhole she had seen him in the chair stooping from one side to the other to watch the train go round and round. It

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was on the third morning that she had seen the revolver. By this time, she beheld it without surprise. Frustration itself was in the stooping figure and the vague, wistful face following from side to side, with an unchanging absent intentness, the train spin round the chair.

Elmira was no nearer determining how she should act when she lifted up her skirts and stepped cautiously over the track, and then over the fort beyond. But she had decided to keep matters in her own hands until the very last moment. It did not seem likely that anything could happen until he had got rid of the toys. Otherwise, what would be the use of all of them? In the meanwhile she would find out everything she could.

She walked into the bathroom. Since last she saw it the tub had been converted into a fish-pond, and on it were floating a steamboat and a sailboat. She was gazing upon them with mixed feelings of childlike interest and mature speculation when Four-Thirteen returned. He came into the bathroom with noiseless, nervous quickness and stood beside her.

"How was the ham and eggs?" asked Elmira. "Did you find you could take a bit?"

"Yes. You didn't touch any of these things, did you?"

"No," answered she. "Ain't they fine? You don't mean to say that steamboat can go?"

His face trembled at once into a radiant smile. "Of course it can. Suppose I'd buy any steamboat that was a fake?"

"Let's see it go."

He lifted it from the water and wound it up proudly. "You just watch," said he as he put it back.

The steamboat began to move. It churned the water and made little ripples on the surface. In the ripples the sailboat rocked. "Oh!" cried Elmira. "Ain't it wonderful what they get up nowadays? I never saw anything like it."

She knelt by the tub and blew upon the sail of the boat. But it only wabbled and dipped dangerously. The steamboat, having butted into the side of the tub, sheered off diagonally. The helpless craft lay directly in its track.

"Look out!" he called. "She'll run you down. Look out there!"

Elmira stretched a frantic finger and shoved her boat out of the way just in time.

"No fair," said the man. "Against all rules of navigation. A boat should only run under her own equipment."

"But you'd have run her down!" exclaimed she indignantly. "And if you blow on her she wabbles."

"That's because you don't know how to blow. Watch me."

He blew with no better results. The steamboat had by this time butted its nose on the other bank, and was ploughing a second diagonal passage triumphantly past the balky sailer. The man looked at the latter pathetically.

"I'm glad we found out about it in time. That present would never have been a success."

"Nonsense. It's for the park in the summer-time. I've seen the kids sail them there. You've got to fill the sail all over like a breeze. What we need is a fan. Haven't you got a fan among all those things?"

He shook his head regretfully. "I never thought of a fan. Of course, that's what he would have needed in the winter-time."

"Oh, well, cheer up!" said Elmira. "A piece of stiff wrapping-paper will do just as well, and I'm sure you've plenty of that. Get me a piece and I'll show you."

He went with alacrity. But his return was slower. "You won't crumple it, will you?"

"No, I'll be careful." She folded it and fanned in short gentle sweeps. The boat sailed proudly. It had no difficulty in passing the laboring steamer.

"Hurrah!" cried the man. Slow tears were splashing from his cheeks into the water. "Now I'll wind her up again and we'll race."

Elmira's heart, locked up in its safety-deposit box, had begun to glow. "So you see," she remarked casually, "sometimes things that look like failures ain't. You've got to get at them the right way, that's all."

She wafted the favoring gale until the steamboat ran down. It was allowable for each to steer a boat when it bumped against the side of the bathtub, and give it a clean getaway on another vertical voyage.

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"I can beat your old steamboat any time," she said when they had finished.

"Do you want to see how the train runs?" ventured the man timidly.

"I'll bet," said Elmira, "that a man who turns the covers down in the morning and piles up his wrapping-paper and strings and boxes would be apt to have the top button of his coat that's off, in his vest pocket."

The man looked down at his coat. Mechanically he inserted his finger and thumb into his vest pockets. Out of one he pulled a key and put it back again. Out of the other he produced a button and looked at it in surprise. He matched it solemnly with the one upon his coat. "Why, so I have," said he. "I don't remember anything about it."

Elmira laughed. "That's what comes of being brought up orderly. It works by itself after it gets started. I'll sew it on for you."

She laid her hand upon the lapel of his coat.

He edged away. "No, no!" said he sharply. His eyes narrowed with pain. "Please don't do that."

"Show me how to run that train," said she briskly. "Take off your coat and I'll sew the button on for you while you're doing it."

"No. I don't want you sewing anything for me. This coat will last me as it is."

But in a moment his eyes wandered hankeringly to the track.

"You don't mean to say," said Elmira, "that those cars will stay on a curved track like that?"

"I thought they wouldn't either, but they will," he cried eagerly. "See!"

He wound up the locomotive and stood back regarding her in triumph as it rattled round the track.

"Well, well!" said she heartily, "ain't it wonderful what they get up nowadays? That's better than the steamboat. Give me your coat."

His gaze had gone back to the train again with tender admiration. He took off his coat mechanically.

"Your vest, too. Might as well patch up that moth-hole while I'm about it. My, my! Did you ever see anything so sassy as that engine?"

She left the room and returned hastily with needle and thread. He had resumed his stooping position in the chair, intently following the train round and round. So intent was he that Elmira paused softly at the bureau, and locked the second drawer from the bottom and put the key in her pocket. Then she sat and proceeded to sew on the button.

When the train ran down he looked up with a start, seeming to remember that somebody else was in the room. His mild eyes rested upon Elmira sewing. They dwelt upon her with fond and sad reminiscence.

She looked up at the same moment. Whereupon, although she had just finished with the button, she snipped it off from the under side and began again, smiling at him affably.

"It's a shame that a real neat man like you should ever go round with a button off. Nobody gives you credit for having it in your pocket."

The man started and sighed. Then he switched his mind back from the past to the present. "What about to-morrow morning?" he asked with a timid swagger of audacity.

"To-morrow morning?" returned Elmira thoughtfully. "It's Wednesday, isn't it?"

His gaze became colored with reproach. He seemed to have made up his mind for another revelation. He hunched back in his chair. "Yes," he said dully, "the twelfth."

"It was funny to say it was just Wednesday, wasn't it? When I said I had something to tell you about it."

"Funny?" he repeated in the same flat voice.

"It struck me funny just then," explained Elmira lamely. "To be acting as if I was telling you something. I suppose you must have laid out as much as fifty dollars on these things."

"Eighty-nine," corrected the man vigorously. "That's a bang-up birthday, ain't it? And I've got eleven more dollars to spend."

"When are you going to do it?"

"Do it?" he said with a quick, frightened air. "Do what?"

"Spend it," said Elmira, as if she had not noticed the implication.

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"Oh, this afternoon, I guess! It's exciting to wait until just the last moment and feel you'll never get done in time."

Elmira took up the new clew eagerly. "I wonder then you didn't wait. Instead of spending most of your money beforehand."

"But you don't dare put it off so long. Because it isn't every time you find what you want. And that's exciting, too. Wondering if you will, or if everything's going to be spoiled this time."

"What is it you want?"

"You want the fathers and mothers together if you can get them. Sometimes with the kids and sometimes without them. When they haven't brought 'em along they talk to each other and say, 'Don't you think Bill would like this?' or 'That's just the kind Tom told God about when he said his prayers the other night, don't you remember?' But, of course, principally you want the kids, too. You can't always have your rathers in this world, and as a general rule you can't get the fathers and kids at the same time. The fathers are at work. And if they come, then the mother is almost sure not to have brought the kid."

"Well, what if she hasn't?" said Elmira.

"Then they can't lend him to you, of course. And that's the main thing."

"Lend him?"

"Yes. To pick out things for you to buy. That's the only way you can be sure to get just what he'd want."

"How old is he?" said Elmira softly.

"Seven."

Her eyes kindled approvingly. "You don't mean to say that all these things were picked out by seven-year-old kids that you borrowed!"

The man nodded eagerly. "I guess every kind of boy there is has had a finger in this pie."

"How'd you tell they were seven years old?" asked Elmira breathlessly.

"Oh, I asked 'em. Then, you can tell pretty well when you've been watching them come along year after year. Say, you wouldn't guess how different they were last year. The things they wanted, I mean. And I suppose they won't want many of these things here when they're eight." He sighed. "But then I don't have to bother about that. Still, I always hoped he'd get big enough to take into a regular sporting-goods place. Toys are all right, but I always hoped he'd get old enough to want a Spalding Junior Professional horse-hide ball and a number 50B bat and a catcher's mitt. It would have been fun to see him handle those."

Elmira pretended to sew in silence for some time. She had given up snipping off the button and was only poking the needle in and out of the cloth. She felt foolish and mean sticking it in and pulling it back through the same hole.

"When are you going to give him the things?" she said at last.

"We generally," said the man very slowly and fondly, "used to arrange them about the bed the night before. That's the way we used to have them ourselves—his mother and I. Just woke up in the morning and found them there."

"His mother?" Elmira jabbed the needle viciously into the coat. She was really jabbing her own duplicity, for she knew perfectly well what his tone conveyed. "I should think she would have wanted to help you with these."

"I expect she would," he said simply. "She died last spring."

Elmira fumbled silently with the coat.

"That's why I didn't feel like having you do any sewing for me. But it was very kind of you to offer. Have you finished?"

Elmira gulped. She reached across the wooden fort and handed him the coat and vest. He put them on mechanically. She was trying to size it up. Even if his wife was dead, why should a neat, home-loving man, buying presents for his little boy, be fingering a revolver?

"Well, when are you going to take him these?" she hazarded again. "I suppose, being all by yourself, you ain't trying to bring him up at home?"

"He?" said the man vacantly. "Who?"

"The boy."

"Oh!" The man puckered his mouth with pathetic drollery. "That's just make-believe. There ain't any boy."

"You mean to say?" cried Elmira.

"We thought years ago—his mother and I—there was going to be one. But there never was. By and by we pretended to get him presents just as if there had

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been. It was his mother thought of that. But we didn't like to give him a birthday at first—that seemed too painful. So we gave him Christmas presents. It sort of came easier when everybody else was doing it. We gave him one-year-old presents and two-year-old presents. Then, by that time we thought we wouldn't mind if we made it a birthday. Keeping just *his* birthday made him seem so much realer than keeping everybody's Christmas. And that year, she hit on the idea of borrowing a kid from some people standing next to us. She was always such a woman for ideas. We'd been edging up close as possible listening to the way they talked. And she said—you'd have died to hear her—she said: 'Excuse me, isn't that beautiful little boy of yours three years old? Yes, I thought so. So is ours. Would you mind lending him to us? So that we can choose what he likes best and then we'll be sure.' And the two women laughed and the boy's mother told him to go with us. He came right to my wife. Children always would come to her, except the child that never came, you know. And we took turns holding him up while he picked out his presents. He wanted striped rubber dolls and things on sticks and fuzzy white poodles. He was a nice kid with a funny little way of sucking a hole in his left cheek. I guess next year he'll be wanting a real Spalding 50B bat and a cork-centre ball and a catcher's mitt."

Elmira stepped over the fort and began to inspect the locomotive as if she were looking for dust. Finally she said: "Did you give the kid the things he picked out?"

"Oh, no!" cried the man, surprised at her question. "Oh, no! Don't you see that his father and mother would have guessed that we were making believe? Or they might have asked us about it. That would have been too painful. Besides, even if it was make-believe, it was really ourselves we were giving the things to, you know."

"Where are they?" asked she.

"All at the house."

"What! All those six years of playthings no kid ever played with?"

He inclined his head very slowly, as if he were spanning the years in one long reminiscence.

"And all as fine as these?" she gasped.

"Oh, no! it's the going ones that cost and young children don't take to those particularly. Then, his mother and I never had so much money as I had this time."

"How is that?" asked Elmira impulsively.

"I took it out of the savings-bank. The whole one hundred dollars. I—I don't suppose that I shall ever really need it now. That is, what money I shall need I've made arrangements for."

Her eyes went involuntarily to the bureau-drawer, and her fingers closed on the key in her pocket. But the man was not looking. He was busy with his thoughts.

"We'd been saving it up, his mother and I, because we knew presents would be getting more expensive as time went on. Do you know, I've thought lately perhaps I was mighty selfish? Sometimes I've thought she'd rather we pretended it was a girl. But having begun a boy we never thought of changing it. That is, his mother never spoke about it, and she was the one that had the ideas."

Elmira was still on her knees by the track. "What's going to become of the things—afterward?"

"Oh, I don't know," he answered wearily. "And I don't care. I've had all the good out of them I can get. There isn't anybody that belongs to me for them to go to."

Elmira slowly took in the array of spick-and-span toys. Her mind's eye travelled to the distant empty house. Somewhere out of its recesses a magnificent and lonely assemblage, undimmed by time and unbroken by handling, flashed like a vision upon her.

"Eighty-nine dollars' worth here and all the rest at home?" she cried incoherently. "And none of them ever used. It ain't—it ain't decent."

"What ain't?"

"Not to use them! And use them *up*. They were made to be used and used up. Did you ever hear of any seven-year-old kid having toys that he had when he was one and two and three and four and five and six? No; he'd played with them and banged them and broken them and mended them again until there just nat-

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urally wasn't any more of them." Elmira's eyes flickered energetically over his face and her voice was headlong with emotion. She had not seen her vision in vain. She packed it all into one glowing conclusion. "Toys that ain't been played into bits haven't ever been anything at all. They haven't *lived!*"

But the man was apathetic, for all his surprise at her unlooked-for excitement. "No, I suppose not. But then we bought them for a child that hadn't lived."

"And you don't care where they go to? Or where anything goes to?" cried Elmira despairingly.

"Nor where I go to," said the man finishing out her thought.

Elmira put in a few moments of hard thinking. "What's the use," she said at last, "of being so neat about the paper and boxes and strings if you don't expect to do them up again?"

"There isn't any use. It's just like life itself. You take all sorts of trouble because it's your nature to or you think you ought to, and then it amounts to nothing after all."

"Well," said Elmira, "do you know what this will amount to? Two men will come here and sling all these things together slap-dash, and everything will get lost and broken and mixed up in a disgusting way. I should think you'd hate to think of that. A neat man like you."

He frowned thoughtfully. "Why, I do," he owned.

"And then," she went on more energetically, "after everything's been spoiled and they've been lying round for weeks, they'll be dumped into some asylum. And nothing will go to the right kids. And like as not, there'll only be enough left of them to aggravate any kid as gets 'em. This track will be one place and those cars another, and Lord knows if there'll be any insides to the engine. I should think you'd hate to think of that. Picking them out so careful and liking to play with them the way you do."

"Yes, I should," agreed the man. But he shook his head wearily. "Still, that's all they ever were, anyway. An aggravation."

Elmira ignored her momentary setback. "I'll tell you what ain't decent about it. It's keeping things from being what they were meant to be and doing what they were meant to do. That ain't the act of a clean, neat man who wants everything in its right place. You would see it fast enough if I was to take that steamboat out of the tub and wind it up and try to run it over the carpet. Wouldn't you?"

The man looked down at the carpet as if trying to construct the picture. He had begun to be interested. "I suppose anybody would know that wasn't the right way."

Elmira plucked the words out of his mouth in her eagerness. "If they didn't you'd want to show them the right way," she cried triumphantly. "And wouldn't you like to show real kids?"

She stopped electrified at the unexpected goal she had reached. "Why, why!" she gasped.

He had vaguely caught her exaltation. "What is it?" he cried tremulously.

"Where do you live?" she exploded. "Here, in town?"

He jumped, both at her energy and at her irrelevance. "Yes."

"Well," she went on rapidly, "what do you think of this? Here's the proposition. You say you've got eleven dollars left to spend to-night. Well, we'll have a party with it, ice-cream, cake, candy, candles—and *kids!*"

"A party?" he echoed, bewildered.

"Yes, at your house. You pack up all these things and take them home and get out all the toys and buy the eats, and I'll furnish the kids. I've got two myself to begin with. They're my sister's and she's dead, and I put them out at a day nursery while I'm here. They're one and two years old. Then will come the kid that gets the striped balls and the things on sticks and the fuzzy poodles. I know where I can borrow him. And I'll undertake to find the rest—a four-year-old, a five-year-old, a six-year-old, and this kid here." Elmira wanted room. She stepped over the fort excitedly and into the free passageway by the door where she could move back and forth without regard to her footing. In this narrow space she vibrated like a pendulum. "Say, here's a better proposition. It'll take you all day showing them how to use the things, and judging from the sailboat I'll have to

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chip in some myself. I'll cut it to-morrow and take a holiday. Instead of an evening party, we'll borrow them for all day long. So you'd better get a turkey and we'll have dinner. I'll do the cooking. *That's* what's going to happen to-morrow morning."

The man was moving his head to and fro, following her quick motion with a startled and fluttering gaze. He seemed hypnotized.

"But—but—" he protested, pointlessly.

"Oh, come on, Four-Thirteen! What do you say?"

"I—I said I'd never go into that empty house again," he stammered feebly, but he said it as one putting forth an objection which he hopes will be immediately demolished.

She did not disappoint him. "It's going to take you quite some while to pack up these things. Finding the right boxes and papers and strings—a neat man like you. And then you've got to take a nap, for there'll be plenty of work later. A nap *inside* the bed. When I finish here, it will take me the rest of the afternoon to collect the five kids for to-morrow. There's cartloads of them where I live, but this ain't any hit-or-miss job. Then I'll get my sister's two from the nursery and come back, and you can pile the three of us and the packages into an automobile and take us up there. Don't you see? I'll guarantee there won't be anything empty about that house inside of two minutes."

He stared at her rapturously. The tears were running down his cheeks. With difficulty he was keeping up with this dazzling programme so vigorously unrolled before him.

"And then?" he said.

"Then I'll look over the house and see what's wanted. And you'll go out and get my two kids some bread and milk and we'll give them their supper and put them to sleep, and then we'll go out and do the marketing for to-morrow. I wouldn't trust you alone even if you are neat, seeing it's to be a whole dinner."

"And then?" he said tremulously.

"Then I'll take the kids and go home. And come back early with the whole seven of them and we'll have the party."

"I—I shouldn't like to wake up in that empty house on his birthday—all by myself," he entreated. "I'd rather wake up here—or anywhere. And there ain't any use disturbing the kids, is there? Right after they've got to sleep. Everything is just as—just as it was left. And there's room enough."

"All right," said Elmira. "Fix it the way you want it."

"And perhaps—" he went on timidly with a coaxing smile. "Perhaps you'd put the biggest kid to sleep in my bed."

"Yes, perhaps I might," said Elmira. "But, Four-Thirteen," she added warningly, "he kicks something awful."

"He does!" cried Four-Thirteen with a squeal of delight. "The little tyke! Oh! I'd better get him a 50B bat and a horsehide ball and a catcher's mitt right off this afternoon. Next year we can get him something else."

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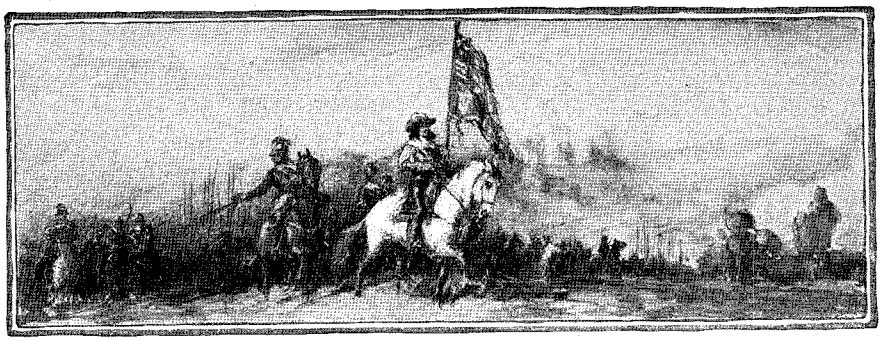

THE STANDARD-BEARER

(SIR EDWARD VERNEY OF CROYDON)

By Henry van Dyke

I

"How can I tell," Sir Edward said,
"Who has the right or the wrong o' this thing?
Cromwell stands for the people's cause,
Charles is crowned by the ancient laws;
English meadows are sopping red,
Englishmen striking each other dead,—
Times are black as a raven's wing.
Out of the ruck and the mirk I see
Only one thing!
The King has trusted his banner to me,
And I must fight for the King."

II

Into the thick of the Edgehill fight
Sir Edward rode with a shout; and the ring
Of grim-faced, hard-hitting Parliament men
Swallowed him up,—it was one against ten!
He fought for the standard with all his might,
Never again did he come to sight,—
Victor, hid by the raven's wing!
After the battle had passed we found
Only one thing,—
The hand of Sir Edward gripped around
The banner-staff of his King.

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Drawn by F. C. Yohn.

The standard-bearer.

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OMMIRANDY

By Armistead C. Gordon
Author of "Maje," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALTER BIGGS

YOUNG Mars' Jeems sat in his easy chair in the little library. His knees were crossed, and at times he ran his left hand nervously through his straggly gray imperial. His gold-rimmed spectacles were set above his nose, and the weekly paper from his home county lay across the arm of the chair. He looked at Ommirandy over his specs. There was something in the scent of the summer roses outside near the open window that brought back to his memory, even more vividly than did the newspaper, those other days at Kingsmill.

Young Mars' Jeems's interest in the old woman's remarks was casual. A paragraph in the paper he had just laid down, or the odor of the late summer blossoms, or both, had fetched to him with a sudden pang that seemed to stop his heart-beats for a moment and to stifle his breath, the consciousness that he would never again behold the home of his fathers as its possessor. His mind, in repeated lapses of attention to Ommirandy's monologue, had been for half an hour back there on the river. In the hill-heart of this new high country he had come somehow to miss with an indefinable and poignant longing the broad expanse of river-water; and the radiant atmosphere of the western hills, lacking the bay-breezes, seemed almost oppressive on this pellucid August morning.

Ommirandy paused for a moment in her search for late summer spiders in the room where young Mars' Jeems was sitting. Her weapon of extermination was a short-handled broom.

"I ain't see yit how come you don't wanter go back down dar', young Mars' Jeems," said Ommirandy.

"I wish I could go, Mirandy," he said, and sighed.

"Well den, ye kin go," commented the old woman, brushing an invisible cobweb from an immaculate corner.

"No, I've got to try and get used to staying up here and being away from the old place."

Again his thin fingers nervously caressed the thin imperial.

Ommirandy looked at him, and fancied that she could see a great weariness behind the glasses of the gold-bowed spectacles. She made a jab at the corner nearest her with the broom.

"I don't see why ye won't go back ter yer own home," she said with a touch of asperity in her voice.

"It's not my home any more, Mirandy. It's sold. It belongs to somebody else now, you know."

"Dar ain't no use tellin' me nothin' like dat," said the old woman emphatically. "I done heerd ye come over dat befo'. Dem folks ain't got no right fur ter take it away from ye. You know dey ain't. Ain't it done been in de fambly hunnerds o' years? Dat's plum' foolishness, young Mars' Jeems. Who dey, anyhow, fur ter perten' ter take dat place?"

The question was full of righteous indignation. Young Mars' Jeems again smiled the tired smile, and uncrossed his legs. The county newspaper fell unheeded to the floor.

"I hope the weather'll be good, Mirandy, so that you can get down there without any rain," he said kindly, glancing in the direction of the maple-tree.

Ommirandy went to the open window, and looking out, sniffed the ozonic morning air.

"Umph!" she grunted.

"How is the weather?" he asked, apparently oblivious of the sunshine that was streaming into the room.

"'Fo' Gord," said the old woman as she turned and struck an imaginary spider

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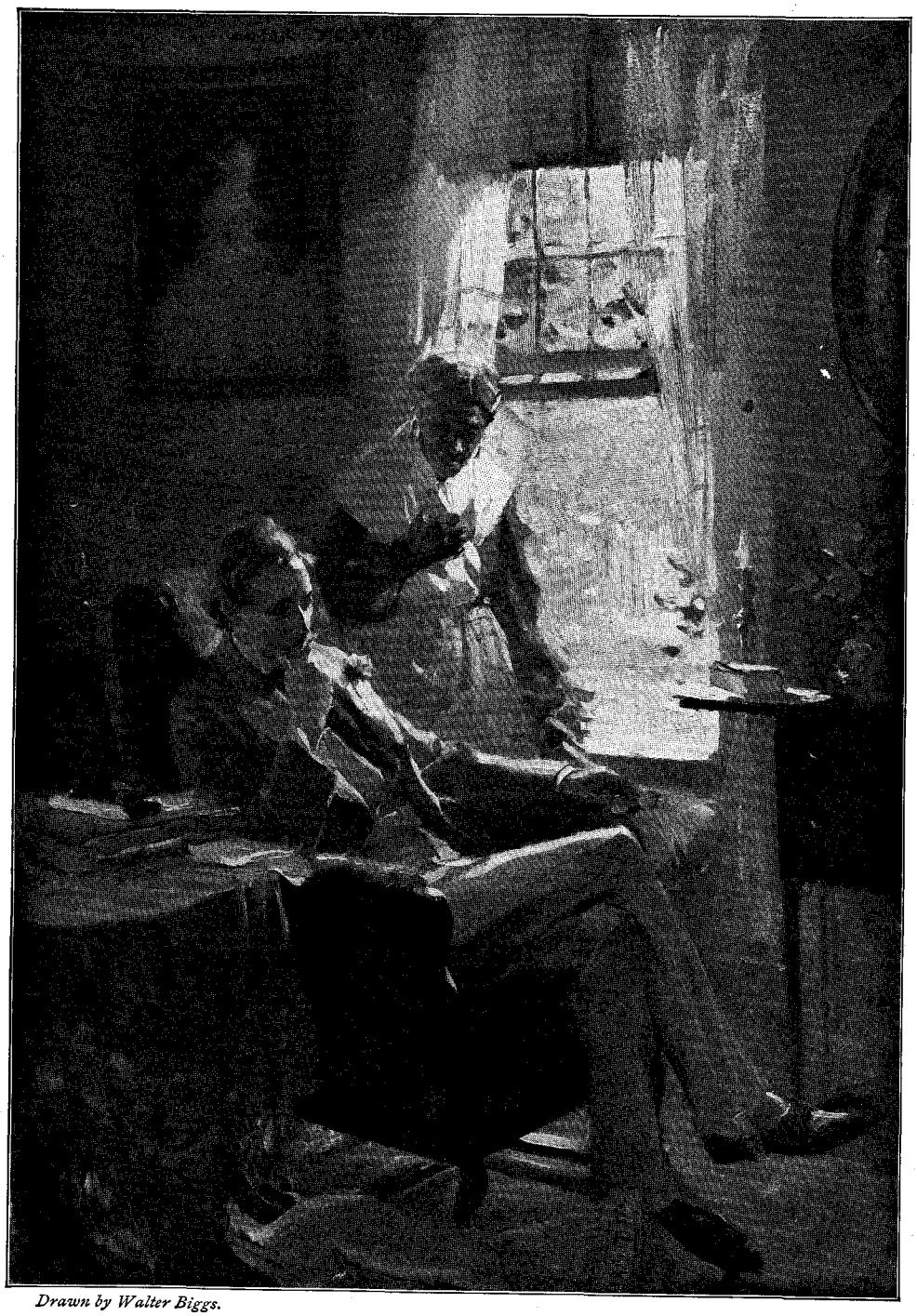

Drawn by Walter Biggs.

"I'm poor, now, Mirandy, and I can't pay you wages."—Page 764.

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on the wall with a vicious whack, "'fo' Gord, young Mars' Jeems, I dunno nothin' 'bout it."

"Well, why don't you know about it?" he queried with a show of interest.

She looked at him severely.

"Young Mars' Jeems, you done furgot," she replied. "Ain't you done read ter me out'n de paper evvy day what de weather gwi' be? Dey done 'mancipate de almanac dese days, like dey 'mancipate some o' dese here niggers; an' now de newspapers is done got it. 'Fo' Gord, young Mars' Jeems, I useter know all about dat weather, but sence dem folks in Washin'ton is tuk hold on it, an' put it in de paper, I done gin it up. I dunno nothin' 'bout no weather no mo'. Nor, sir."

To the unaccustomed, who lived beyond the pale of young Mars' Jeems's household, Ommirandy's appearance seemed grotesque. Her taste in costume was of a primitive character that was bizarre, and verged on the barbaric. It expressed itself in extraordinary turbans of large dimensions and vivid colors, and in corresponding raiment of varied and impressive peculiarities. Her huge headkerchiefs from day to day ran a gamut from yellow to red and from red to purple and from purple in turn to blue. These original hues were in her regard a badge of ancestry. Realizing from association the importance of pedigrees, she claimed descent from an African king, who was supposed to have worn the rainbow as the mark of his high office, and who had in his time come across the ocean in a slave-ship from the Guinea coast to serve young Mars' Jeems's great-grandfather. Ommirandy's skirts were usually of bright patterns of a large and loud kind; and her aprons were checked; while the capes she wore were always immaculately white as a token of habitual contact with the race to which her forebears had been inevitably attached for generations.

In the days of her youth Ommirandy had received the classical name of Miranda. She had learned at a later date that it meant "wonderful," and she had so borne herself in life as to approve the appellation. The degeneracy of what she called her "entitle" into "Ommirandy" had come about through the careless transformation in the daily walk and conversation of her associates, white and black, of the prefix which, in common with the women of her race, became hers when she had grown up and got married. There was a natural amalgamation of the labial letters of prefix and name thrown together; and "Aunt Miranda," under the influence of what is still known as "the broad A"—a potent and unfailing shibboleth at Kingsmill—degenerated in the mouths of both races by a perfectly natural process into the more melodious "Ommirandy."

She had children and grandchildren in the neighborhood of the old house on the river, some of whom were sufficiently well-to-do to have cared for her in her declining years. But the mere suggestion from Simon, her eldest son, that she should forsake her "white folks" and live with him, when young Mars' Jeems moved away from Kingsmill, had stirred all the antagonism of her passionate nature.

"Simon ain't never had no sense, nohow. He done got along in de worl' 'count o' bein' born wid a caul. 'Tain't no sense o' Simon's what got him dat house an' little patch o' groun'. Simon mean all right, an' I reck'n he want me. But you wants me, too, young Mars' Jeems."

Young Mars' Jeems had remonstrated with Ommirandy upon her declination to stay with her children.

"I'm poor, now, Mirandy, and I can't pay you wages. I've got to take care of your mistress and of William, and I have got very little to do it with."

"Mistis all de time sick, an' she got ter have me to look arfter her, an' fetch her water 'n' things——"

Then with passionate assertion she had broken out:

"Young Mars' Jeems, I nussed you at dis withered breas', you an' my nigger baby, Simon, tergether. I loves Simon, but I loves you, too, my young marster. You needs me, an' I ain't gwineter quit ye. I gwi' go wid you an' mistis like dat gal in de corn-fiel' say in de Good Book. You-all's folks is my folks; an' whar you-all's a-gwine, dar's whar Mirandy's a-gwine along wid ye."

And young Mars' Jeems had said to her in his kindest voice:

"You're an old fool, Mirandy."

Now, after six months' absence from

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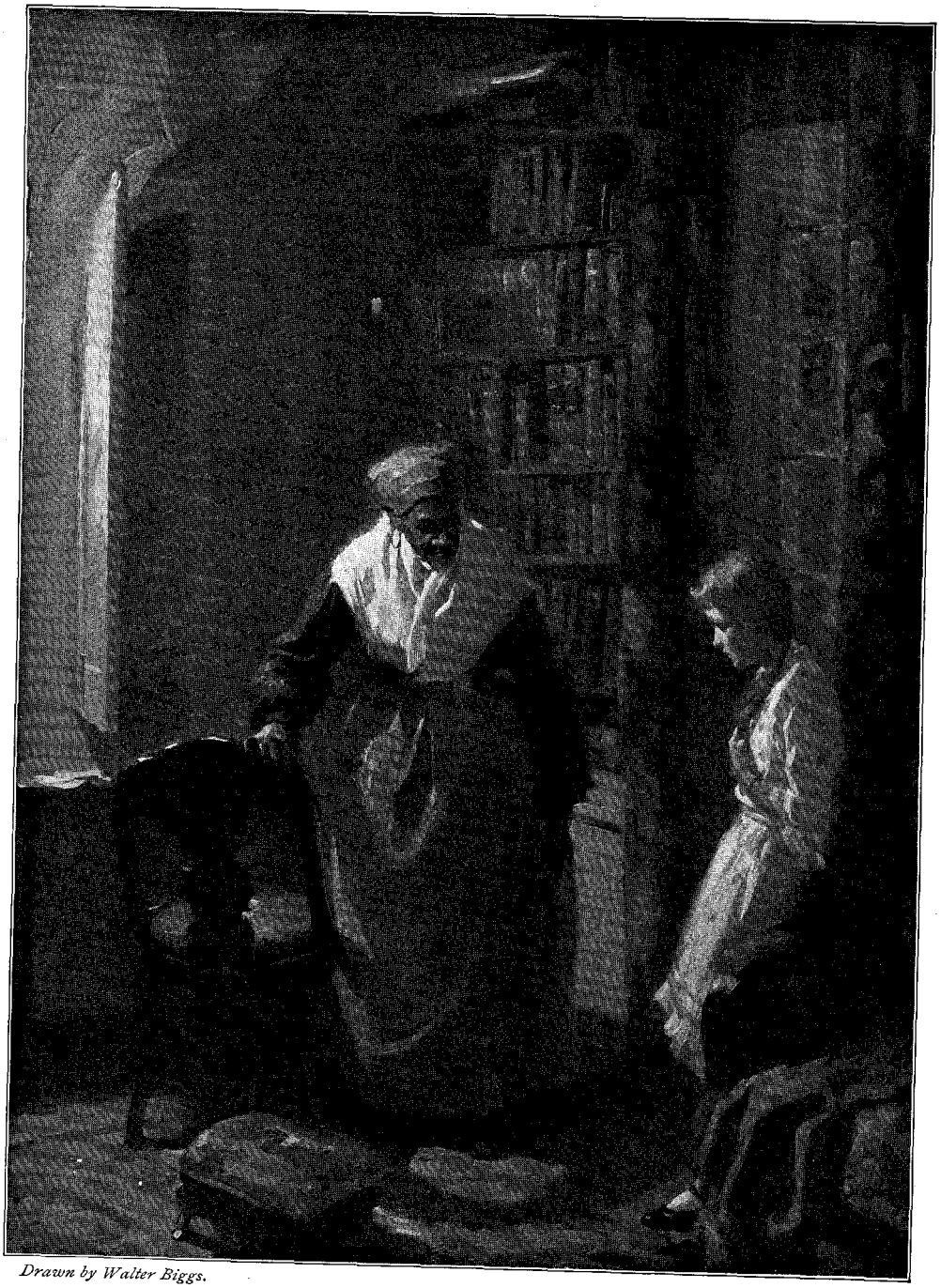

Drawn by Walter Biggs.

"Um-huh!" she said. "It done come ter me. I knows what you is, little gell!"—Page 770.

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Kingsmill, Ommirandy had announced to young Mars' Jeems that she was going back home, if young Mars' Jeems would kindly permit her to go.

"I jes' gwine back down dar fur a little while ter see Simon an' de chillun, ef you don't mine," she said.

In her proffer of the request young Mars' Jeems recognized the expression of her unvarying attitude toward the emancipation which the long-ended war had brought her. The fact that all the other negroes in the country were free made no difference to Ommirandy. She positively and persistently refused to recognize her own freedom; and she frequently and volubly denied the right of any power or principality to set free any of the slaves on the Kingsmill plantation, whatever fate might befall other slaves on other plantations less fortunate in their masters than it had been.

"No use ter talk ter me 'bout no freedom," she said. "Young Mars' Jeems he boun' ter have niggers. You-all knows dat. Ain't old mars' and all de white folks at Kingsmill done had 'em fur hunnerds o' years? How dey gwi' git along widout 'em? Dey jes' can't. You-all kin carry on wid what you calls freedom, ef you wants ter. But I ain't a-gwine ter. All o' you b'longs ter young Mars' Jeems, anyhow, jes' like ye always is, 'scusin' you ain't got no sense, an' he don't want ye."

The culmination of life's woes had seemed to the old woman to be reached in the sale of the "great house" and its fertile fields. With unwilling eyes and defiant heart she had seen by degrees the immemorial timber cut from the uplands and sold to make daily bread. She had witnessed the falling of the fences, and the growth of broom-sedge and bushes in the uncultivated river-bottoms. And when the day of the sale came she sat in sackcloth and ashes.

What could an Ohio manufacturer, millionaire though he be, know of this mighty mansion haunted with ineffable memories? Colonial governors had dwelt in it when the palace at Williamsburg was burned. Grandees in powdered periwig, ladies with patch on chin, had thronged its ancient halls in bygone years. Love and hope and aspiration had dwelt in it through the generations of its line. Death itself had seemed restful and reassuring there.

What might the new-rich care for the wainscoted and rosewood-panelled rooms, the carved mantelpieces of Italian marble, the mahogany doors, the noble portraits of those who had lived there and departed?

"De buzzard done got in de eagle's nes'," she muttered, when the auctioneer's voice had ceased its crying.

Two months before Ommirandy asked and received permission to visit Simon she had suddenly and unexpectedly fired a question at young Mars' Jeems, which he had already propounded to himself very often since the family had left Kingsmill, and which still remained unanswered.

"Is Little Mr. William gwine ter college in de fall?" she had queried, standing before him, broom in hand, in all the dignity of her five feet four, with her red cotton bandanna tied about her head and her big gold-hooped earrings, that she had worn from a time whereof the memory of no one of the household ran to the contrary, dangilng from her huge ears.

Young Mars' Jeems had laid down his country newspaper, and had looked at the grim and deeply lined face with an odd sense of amusement. It occurred to him that if Ommirandy could be cut off at the neck, and her curiously shaped torso and limbs clad in the linsey-woolsey dress and the expansive checked apron thus eliminated from view, her head and face might be used by an artist as a perfect model for one of Morgan's pirates at the sack of Portobello.

"I'm not certain whether I can get the money, Mirandy," he had replied, with a pang at his heart. Little Mr. William was the hope of his declining years, and he had been repeatedly possessed of a dread that the father's later poverty might leave the sturdy son with an undue handicap in the race of life.

"It takes right smart fur ter send a boy ter Williamsbu'g dese days, don't it, young Mars Jeems?" Ommirandy had queried anxiously; and he had answered, with a sigh, that it did.

"How much?" persisted the old woman huskily; and he had noticed that she seemed to be laboring under some strongly repressed emotion.

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"Oh, I suppose he could make it on three or four hundred dollars a year down there! He's a careful boy."

He drummed on the arm of his chair with his thin fingers.

"Um-huh," responded Ommirandy contemplatively.

"I've got the last bond on Kingsmill still. I might sell that on a pinch," he said.

"Ain't dat what you done put by fur mistis an' him ter live on, arfter you an' me done gone?" she demanded.

"Yes," he answered, smiling at her persistence.

"Den you ain't gwi' tetch it," she had said grimly, and waddled out of the room muttering to herself as she went.

"Nor, sir. Not mo'n two ur three days. I don't wanter stay away long," Ommirandy assured young Mars' Jeems, when he acquiesced in her plan to visit Simon. "Simon, he gittin' ole. He jes' yo' age, but he heap wuss off'n you is. He las' letter his younges' gal, what goes ter de free school, writ up here, say Simon suff'rin' wid pain in de head and mizry in de back. Mistis, she read me de letter. I gotter go down dar an' see 'bout my son, Simon."

"Do you think you can get home all right?" queried young Mars' Jeems. "It's a long time since you did any travelling by yourself, Mirandy."

"I ain't affeard," she answered confidently. "Dar's lots o' white gennulmens all over dis here State yit, jes' like you is, dat'll look arfter de ole-time nigger mammy ef she gits herse'f inter trouble. Dey didn' all git killed off in de war. I'll be dar all right. Who gwi' bother me, anyhow?"

In the twilight of the long August day, when dusk was slipping into dark, Lucille, aged ten, the only daughter of the new owner of Kingsmill, parted the curtains and entered the great room that in bygone generations had been the reception-room of the old house, and later had been the library.

Lucille, aged ten, had the lively imagination often incident to these years of a tenderly raised and precocious child of indulgent parents. She was familiar with fairies and hobgoblins, not to say demons and gnomes, of which she had read in her story-books, and had dreamed in the always enforced intellectual solitude of an only child. She had all her life been sure that she would like to see a fairy. About hobgoblins and gnomes she was by no means so certain; and as for demons, she was positive that to meet one would terrify her. A leprechawn, the little green Irish fairy, who dances with his fellows in the tiny rings in the moonlight, and who will tell you where to find a pot of gold if you catch and hold him, had always possessed an irresistible charm for Lucille; but she had sometimes wondered whether, having had the good luck to grasp one, she could hold on to him until he betrayed his wonderful secret. "He might be slippery, like a fishing-worm or an eel, and it would be terrible for him to get away without telling."

Her parents had gone for a ride in the new automobile. She had declined to accompany them, because she wanted to roam all over the house in the twilight and be by herself, and imagine all kinds of creepy things, and dream and think. She was not afraid, for she knew that the servants were in the outhouse and within call; and it filled her with a subtle sense of excitement and adventure to feel that she was all alone in the great mansion that was so very, very old and whose history was thronged with so many eerie stories.

Lucille's father had bought the place something more than six months before, and had fitted it up for a summer home. This was Lucille's first visit.

As she came into the great high-ceilinged room she suddenly felt cold chills crawling up her spine to see a dimly outlined figure stir in the semidarkness, at a spot where there was a cupboard that was a kind of desk let into the wall near the upper east window. It had been for generations a receptacle of family documents, and Lucille knew that it was as old as the house itself and felt that if any place in the ancient mansion was haunted it must be this.

A whole horde of images from the pages of her story-books thronged at once, pell-mell, through her small, excited brain. The dusk was suddenly oppressive to her in the presence of this strange and unexpected apparition.

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Darkness is the mother of imagination and fear; and Lucille felt with her fingers beyond the folds of the portière for what the living love and the dying ask for; and, pressing the electric-light button, she flooded the stately room with light.

"What dat?" came in a harsh and sudden voice from the spot where Lucille had discerned the moving shape in the dim, uncertain twilight.

Lucille looked and saw a startling figure. Its face was unusually large and was colored like a copper cent. It wore a red bandanna handkerchief knotted about the head, and glittering gold hoops were suspended from its huge ears. The apparition seemed squatty, and its dress was bunched at the waist line. Over the skirt was a big checked apron that almost hid it from view. The strange and sudden vision seemed to the little girl shapeless and grotesque and unsymmetrical. It was almost as broad as it was tall, and the long apron-strings of the great checked apron seemed to cut into its middle like a stout cord tied tightly about a meal-sack.

"What dat, I say?" it again asked in a louder and fiercer tone; and Lucille, in terror, with cold chills creeping up her small back, and with shaking knees, imagined that the thing's eyes blazed. This was certainly not a fairy. It was too big for a leprechawn, and was not the right color. She hoped that it wasn't a demon—though she was rather inclined to surmise that it might be. For a second, under the swift spell of this idea, she was on the point of turning off the electric light. Then it occurred to her that it would be dreadful beyond anything in the range of her imagination to be alone in this great, big house, in the dark, with a demon!

"Ugh!" she shuddered.

But being naturally courageous, she quickly recovered herself, with the settled conviction that the strange visitor had all the characteristics and peculiarities of a gnome. She boldly made up her mind that she would not run away shrieking, and that she would not turn off the light, but would face the intruder, whatever it might be.

So she stood looking at her grotesque visitor with a blanched face and a heart thumping so loudly that she thought the gnome must surely hear it.

She replied to its question with another: "Who are you?"

"Nummine, little gell, who I is," came the gruff answer. "You tell me how you make dat light here in dis here room."

"Oh!" answered Lucille. "That is the electric light. You touch a button."

She touched the button, and the place was once more in semidarkness.

"Put it back," growled the gnome; "I gotter look at ye."

On went the light again, and the gnome looked at her.

"Who done dat?" it queried, in a voice that was one of reprobation. "It nuvver used ter be here. Dey useter be wax can'les in de silver sconches, an' de taller dips arfterwards."

"My father," replied Lucille, restored to confidence by the gnome's allusion to former everyday things. "This is his house, you know. He bought it not quite a year ago, and fixed it up, and my mother and I came down last week to see it. It was an awful old rattletrap when he bought it, without anything in it. Now it has electric lights and gas and hot and cold water and——"

Lucille's heart jumped to her mouth as a sound came from the gnome's throat like the growl of some mad animal.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucille.

"Little gell," responded the apparition in a voice that was so alarming in its deep guttural tones as to make Lucille wrap the portières about her, and survey the intruder from their folds with only her wide-eyed and startled small face showing. "Little gell, don't you know you's tellin' me a lie?"

The accusation took Lucille's breath away.

"A lie?" she faltered.

"Don't you know dat dis here place don't b'long ter yo' pa? Don't you know dat dis here place warn't no ramshackle place when yo' pa come here? Don't you know dat yo' pa ain't got money enough ter buy dis here place? Don't you know——"

"Oh, my father is a very rich man, gnome," protested Lucille eagerly. "You don't know him. My mother says he's a regular Aladdin with the wonderful lamp and that he can buy anything he wants."

"Don't ye call me no names, little gell," the old woman said with a softened

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voice. Some vague memory had been conjured up with the child's speech of Aladdin and the lamp. "You jes' lissen ter me. Dar ain't money enough in all de worl' fur ter buy dis here house f'om dem what it belongs ter."

The intruder advanced toward the middle of the room in her eagerness to vindicate the rights of the mansion's former occupants.

"Dis here place belongs ter my white folks. Evvybody knows dat. It done b'long ter 'm fur hunnerds o' years. Evvything inside dis house, an' evvything outside dis house, f'om de ha'th-stone ter de gravestone, b'longs ter 'm. We was all born here, an' we is all buried here."

She waved her hand toward one of the windows.

Lucille could feel her pig-tail growing stiff and her bang standing straight out.

"It isn't a gnome. It's a ghost!" she murmured.

"War an' freedom," continued the visitor, with the light streaming about her and accentuating her grotesqueness, "War an' freedom, an' all o' de things dat is done happened, can't take dis here place away f'om we-all. It's our'n. Mis' an' ole mars' an' all de generations dat's dead out dar in de buryin'-groun' at Christ Church—de ole ones wid de high marble tombstones over 'em, an' dem dat come later wid nothin' but de green grass growin' atop of 'em—dis here place belongs ter dem an' we-all, I tell ye, jes' as much as dat groun' dey rests in."

This funereal discourse was producing an unpleasant effect on Lucille. Her interlocutor had seemed much more agreeable as a gnome than as a ghost.

"Maybe yo' pa thinks it's his'n. But he gwi' fine out! He gwi' fine out!" concluded the apparition.

The gold-hooped earrings in the elephantine ears moved mightily with the ghost's ominous shaking of its turbaned head.

"Didn't my father pay for it?" queried Lucille with anxious voice and quivering lip.

The assurance of her visitor's vigorous assertion had so moved her that momentarily she found herself doubting if everything could be as she had thought, and whether, after all, she and her father and mother might not be interlopers within sacred precincts that belonged to others.

"Pay fur it?" responded the visitor on a high key. "Pay fur it? Ain't I done tole ye dar ain't gole enuf, nur silber enuf, nur yit paper money nur greenbacks enuf in de whole worl' fur ter pay fur it. Tell me dat? Ain't I done tole ye?"

Lucille, with bated breath, maintained a profound silence.

"Dis here house, dese here lan's, dese here ribber low groun's, dese here woods an' fiel's—pay fur dem? Why, he can't pay fur 'em! An' all dis here new stuff what you-all is done put in here—t'arin' de place up an' sp'ilin' of it—carpets, curtains, cheers, pictur's, dat 'ar light ye jes' made—don't none of 'em b'long ter you-all."

Lucille was conscious of a growing sense of guiltiness in being included in the category of the accused. But her belief in her parents' rectitude conquered her temporary fears. She plucked up courage, and determined to have it out with this odd accuser. Dropping the folds of the curtains, she emerged in all the beauty and charm of her eager face and gold hair and white dress, and advanced toward the visitor. The light shone about her and the old woman regarded her with a swift and tender memory of another child that she had seen there in that room many years before.

"Who do you think they all belong to now?" asked Lucille audaciously. "Houses and fields and furniture and pictures can't belong to dead people."

"Don't ye know, chile?" replied Ommirandy, mollified by the nearer sight of her beauty and artlessness. "Ain't dey done tole ye? Dis here place an' all dat's on it—ain't dey done tole ye?"

"No," said Lucille, standing before her.

"Ter young Mars' Jeems," replied her visitor. "An' de Lord knows I wish he could see you dis blessed minute!"

"I never heard of young Mars' Jeems," commented Lucille. "Does he look like you?"

A smile flashed across the buccaneer features of the old woman, and culminated in a quick burst of laughter.

"Now lissen at dat, will ye? Do young Mars' Jeems look lak me?"

The laugh waned into a chuckle, but the grim smile remained.

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"And who are you?" persisted Lucille, recurring to her first question.

"Ommirandy," replied the gnome. "I b'long ter young Mars' Jeems, jes' like dis here house an' groun's an' ev'ything. We was all born here tergether, and we's all gwine ter be buried here tergether. 'Ca'se it's our'n."

While Lucille was puzzling her small brain to understand how Ommirandy could belong to any one—even to young Mars' Jeems—as houses and grounds might belong to people, the old woman regarded her with a look that made her rugged features seem almost benevolent.

"Um-huh!" she said. "It done come ter me. I knows what you is, little gell!"

"What?" asked Lucille, wondering.

"A section," said Ommirandy.

"A what?" ejaculated Lucille, liking the kindly look on the dark face, but still more puzzled than before by the appellation.

"A section, I say, honey. A section. Little Mr. William he's a section, too."

The honk of an automobile was heard in the distance.

"Put out de light, chile. Put it out. I kin git out by de side do'. I done been dat way many o' times."

As the automobile stopped at the gate, Lucille's parents wondered at seeing the library windows suddenly grow dark.

"Gwi' do what? You say dey is? Take me back down dar fur ter stan' a trial? Young Mars' Jeems, since when is you heerd de likes o' dat?"

It was ten days after Ommirandy had returned from her visit to Kingsmill, where for all Lucille's pleasant memories of her, she had left in the mind of Lucille's father a dark suspicion that had grown at last into such assurance as seemed to justify the harsh step he had taken. The officer of the law had come for her. She went with him, scornful and indifferent; and young Mars' Jeems went, too, perplexed and anxious.

The day of the old woman's trial was in late September.

Ommirandy sat inside the bar of the little county court-house that had been built in colonial times, and was now hardly large enough to hold the crowds that gathered in it on county-court days. The clerk, a one-armed soldier, with pinned-up sleeve, had just come in from the still tinier clerk's office in the yard, with his deputy following him, bearing the big order book of the court—one of a series the earlier volumes of which went back to the first half of the seventeenth century.

The old woman was apparently the most indifferent person in the gathering to what was going on. She had seen the white-haired judge ascend the bench, and had recognized him as a visitor of bygone times at Kingsmill; and she had heard the sheriff proclaim, "Oyez! oyez!" and then call the veniremen at the door with old-fashioned and vociferous iteration. But her demeanor was not that of one charged with a crime. Her gaze wandered from the stern features of his honor on the bench to the various portraits of the county's local grandees that hung on the walls of the court-room. She was endeavoring to discern in some one or more of the pictured countenances of these dead local magnates a possible likeness to any of her white folks. It could not be that from this pantheon of the county's departed great men the faces of all the men of Kingsmill were absent; and she was relieved at last to discover two pictures the originals of which, she now recalled, once hung on the panelled walls of the old mansion, and had been since carried to the little Piedmontese home at the foot of the Blue Ridge.

Her case was called, and as the jury was chosen she watched the jurymen enter the box, one after another, at first with a vague and detached curiosity and then with a livelier show of interest. As each took the oath at the clerk's desk and went to his seat, her face kindled. Eight of the sixteen were familiar figures, contemporaries and friends of young Mars' Jeems, who sat beside her in the bar. She could remember these as having frequently been at Kingsmill, and of several she knew the names.

When her lawyer whispered to young Mars' Jeems that the prosecution had the privilege of striking off two of the names from the list of sixteen veniremen, and the defence also of striking off two, she had overheard him and had said audibly:

"Mark off two o' dem boys, young Mars' Jeems; I want dem ole men dat knows me fur ter try me."

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The attorney took her advice.

She stood up in response to the demand of the clerk, who read the indictment, to which she listened attentively.

"How say you? Are you guilty of the felony with which you stand indicted, or not guilty?" concluded the legal functionary.

"Say 'Not guilty,' " directed her lawyer in a staccato whisper.

The room was crowded; the negroes in the little gallery listened with bated breath.

"I knows what ter say widout yo' tellin' me," said Ommirandy. "I ain't done nothin'."

Then she addressed the court, while a subdued laugh went around the audience in the court-room.

"I ain't guilty o' nothin', jedge, 'scusin' standin' by young Mars' Jeems an' my white folks. Ef dat's a felumy, ur whatsomedever dat man calls it, you kin start me ter Richmon' right here an' now. Dar ain't no penitench' dat's uvver gwine ter make Mirandy furgit dem."

The smothered laughter ceased, and the judge looked at the accused with an unaccustomed interest.

"Sit down, old woman," whispered her counsel. "It's all right. The clerk will enter a plea of 'Not guilty,' if your honor please."

He had seen the gray-haired juryman nearest the witness-chair take out his handkerchief and blow his nose violently. Two or three others, also gray-headed, had smiled sympathetically at her plea, and one of them had nudged his neighbor and whispered something to him.

Young Mars' Jeems leaned over and patted Ommirandy on the shoulder.

A negro in the gallery said audibly, "Come along!" and the sheriff picked up the iron poker lying by the empty stove and banged on the stove with emphasis.

"Walk light up thar an' keep quiet!" he called, glowering in the direction from which the voice had come. "Ef anybody chirps up thar agin, I'll put all o' you niggers out o' the cote-'ouse!"

A dead silence followed the admonition.

"Call the commonwealth's witnesses," said the judge, and the sheriff made way through the crowd for Lucille's father, who entered holding Lucille's hand, followed by Ommirandy's son, Simon, who wore a hard and gloomy face.

Ommirandy regarded the new owner of Kingsmill with indifference, and his daughter with a lingering look of admiration. But when she saw her bent and care-worn son hobble toward the clerk's desk and stand waiting his turn to be sworn, she was startled.

"Young Mars' Jeems, what dey got dat boy here fur?" she queried in a voice that was audible through the room.

Young Mars' Jeems wondered, too, but he only shook his head in reply to the question.

After the oath had been administered to the three witnesses, Lucille and Simon were sent out of the court-room in response to the judge's direction that the witnesses should be separated. Then his honor asked that the witnesses for the defence should be sworn, and directed that they also then retire.

Ommirandy arose at the request and before her lawyer could stop her announced:

"I ain't got none, jedge; I don't need no witnesses."

"If your honor please," said the attorney for the defence, "our only witnesses will be the prisoner, and certain others as to character."

The court said that the witnesses as to character might remain in the room, and the deputy clerk walked between the jury and Ommirandy, who stood up again to "kiss the book."

The new owner of Kingsmill was the first witness for the prosecution. His testimony was brief. He had recently come to the county to live. He had bought the old place on the river that belonged to young Mars' Jeems, and had recently brought his wife and daughter there from his home in Ohio for a visit. He had retired from business, and had purchased the plantation with a view to settling there and stocking it, and raising fine horses. He liked horses, and the first purchase he had made, two days before he had bought the place at auction, was a pair of carriage-horses that belonged to the owner of Kingsmill. He had given young Mars' Jeems three hundred and fifty dollars for the horses. He had bought a number of others since.

Young Mars' Jeems was listening in-

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tently. His memory about many things in those last days at Kingsmill was misty, but he remembered the sale of the horses.

The witness continued. He had made many changes in the house and about the plantation. He had put in hot and cold water in the mansion and he had installed an electric-light plant; and he had gone about the countryside and bought up a lot of colonial furniture for the dwelling, to please his wife and Lucille. He had done a lot of fencing about the place, and had erected new barns and stables. Mansion-house and outbuildings alike were pretty dilapidated when he had taken hold. He was not sure that he would continue to live there, but if he did he hoped to make it a model stock-farm.

The gray-haired juryman nearest the witness-chair turned his quid of tobacco over in his mouth and regarded the witness critically.

Young Mars' Jeems listened curiously to the narrative of the changes that had been made at Kingsmill.

Its owner went on. In anticipation of the birthday of his little daughter, Lucille, he had in the last week of August, just past, obtained from his city bank one hundred and fifty dollars in gold. He had intended to buy a pony and pony-cart with this money for Lucille on her anniversary which would recur a week from to-morrow. Lucille's mother had suggested to him that it might be best to give the child the gold and let her make her own selection, and he had intended doing it. He had placed the money, that was in a small canvas bag, in the drawer of a desk which was built into the wall of the library. In this desk, he understood, it had long been the custom of the owners of the place to keep their papers and account-books. That was on the afternoon of the twenty-fourth of August. He and Lucille's mother had gone out for an automobile drive, leaving Lucille at home. The next morning he looked for the money and it was gone. He had naturally said nothing about it to Lucille, but he had learned from her and from other sources that an old colored woman, who had formerly resided on the place, had been upon the day named visiting her son, Simon, who lived half a mile down the river, and that she had been seen about dusk in the library. He did not know who had stolen the money. He only knew that he had put it in the desk and that it was gone.

"Ah-yi!" said Ommirandy, who had been listening intently.

There was a muffled sound of laughter and a scraping of feet on the floor in the gallery above. The sheriff again smote the stove with the iron poker, and glared at the dark faces above him.

"But from what I have heard, I am satisfied that I can lay my hand on the thief," he concluded, gazing significantly in the direction of the prisoner at the bar.

"Object!" said her lawyer, jumping to his feet.

"Objection sustained," said the judge.

"Don't ye look at me, white man," said Ommirandy scornfully. "I ain't tetched nothin' what belong ter you."

"Shut up!" whispered the prisoner's counsel, admonishing her.

"Keep quiet, Mirandy," pleaded young Mars' Jeems, touching her on the shoulder.

"Silence in cote," called the sheriff, beating a tattoo upon the stove.

The oldest juryman in the box coughed, and asked his next neighbor for a "chaw."

"The prisoner must keep quiet," said the judge sternly. "I can't permit these interruptions. Your counsel will speak for you."

"Jedge, I jes' got ter speak fur myse'f, when dat man, what done try ter take evvything dat young Mars' Jeems is got 'way f'om him, 'scuse me o' stealin' his money."

She had arisen from her seat in the earnestness of her protestation and the jurymen bent forward to listen.

"He done run young Mars' Jeems smack out o' his house an' home what his folks is had hunnerds o' years. Kingsmill, jedge. You knows it. I done seed you dar in dem times. I ain't a-gwine ter set still here in dis here cheer an' listen ter no sich talk f'om dat man, jedge. Dat warn't no money o' his'n!"

She waved a bony hand of defiance in the direction of the prosecuting witness.

Young Mars' Jeems's heart sank within him. He saw in his mind's eye the door of the penitentiary gaping for this old friend of all his years and days, and felt that no outsider could understand how she had taken the money in the honest belief that it was his own.

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"For God's sake!" said Ommirandy's lawyer, at her implied admission, leaning back to young Mars' Jeems. "Can't you make her keep her mouth shut? She's giving the whole case dead away."

Young Mars' Jeems shook his head in bewildered negation. He had guessed at her words what Ommirandy had done, but he knew that even his oldest friends on the jury might not understand it, or upon their oaths might not condone it. He wondered vaguely why the faces of several of them were wreathed in smiles.

"Please keep quiet, Mirandy," pleaded young Mars' Jeems, in a tone of weariness. "You are distressing all your friends by your conduct."

"If the prisoner continues to talk," said the judge, "I shall have a juryman withdrawn and send her to jail until the next term."

"Jedge, dar's a heap o' wusser things 'n a ole nigger sweatin' in jail 'twel de nex' term, ur ary 'nuther term," said the prisoner. "I ain't excusin' you o' nuthin', jedge. I knows you is got ter make dese here white folks 'have deyselves an' keep quiet in de cote-'ouse. But 'fo' Gord, jedge, Mirandy got ter git res'less when dat man dar, what done ruin young Mars' Jeems an' run him smack out o' de county, 'twel he done got him up yonder jam' agin' de mountains, 'scuse me o' takin' money dat is young Mars' Jeems's money an' nobody else's. Duz ye hear me, jedge? Is ye listenin' at me?"

A broad grin came over the judge's usually saturnine countenance. The negroes in the gallery guffawed with delight at the unwonted spectacle of one of their race addressing the court at easy length. The sheriff vainly banged for order on the stove. The jurymen with shining eyes stirred in their seats and whispered to each other. The commonwealth's attorney smiled with satisfaction at hearing the prisoner thus contribute to her conviction.

"If your honor please," said Ommirandy's lawyer, rising to address the court, "I feel myself very much embarrassed by the conduct of my client. She seems disposed to tell your honor more than I have been able to get her to tell me. I have undertaken her case in good faith. I would ask the court to warn the jury that they must disregard any statement she makes except from the witness-stand. Otherwise I am helpless, your honor, if she persists in hurting her case."

The judge began to warn the jury as requested, when Ommirandy broke in.

"Lor', chile!" she said with a derisive chuckle, as she looked at her lawyer. "Don't you pester yo'se'f 'bout Mirandy. She ain't a-keerin' nothin' 'bout no case o' hern. She jes' thinkin' 'bout young Mars Jeems."

Young Mars' Jeems crossed and uncrossed his tired legs, and fingered his gray imperial, and patted Ommirandy, whispering:

"Sh-h!"

The counsel for the prisoner declined to cross-examine.

"Stand aside!" he said in an almost despairing voice to the owner of Kingsmill.

"Prisoner," said the judge, leaning forward, "I must punish you severely if you do not refrain from talking."

"I gwineter, jedge," said Ommirandy amiably, beaming upon him. "I sho'ly is gwineter now dat dat man done gone, an' excusin' dey don't say nothin' 'gin young Mars' Jeems."

"Call the next witness," commanded the court, and in response to the sheriff's reiterated bellow at the front door, Simon came hobbling in.

He took his seat in the witness-stand, and looked from his mother in the bar to his fellow freedmen in the gallery. His homely face was black and care-worn and anxious, and he moved his horny left hand nervously across his eyes.

He was a reluctant but truthful witness. He thought it "hard lines" that he was compelled to testify against his own mother, and for a little while he fenced with the commonwealth's attorney in a clumsy effort not to be forced to relate what he knew. But he soon gave this up, and in brief and regretful language told of his mother's visit to his house.

"She didn't stay long, nor, sir. She come one ebenin' an' stay dat night an' de nex' day, an' de nex' night, an' cotch de boat de followin' mornin'."

"Where did she go during her visit?"

"Ter Kingsmill."

"Did she tell you what she went for?"

He looked around him like a hunted

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animal at bay. He hung his head, and again passed his hand across his eyes.

"Answer the question," said the judge.

"Yas, sir. She tole me."

"Well, what did she say?"

"She say she went arter Mars' Jeems's money."

"What else?"

"She say she got it," he mumbled in tones so low that he was compelled to repeat his answer.

"Did she say anything more?"

Simon felt that he could tell nothing worse than what had already been forced from him.

"Yas, sir," he replied, lifting his head and looking timorously up into the gallery.

"What?"

"She say she got what she come fur. She say she was glad fur ter see me an' de rest o' de fambly, but dat wa'n't what fotch her back down here. She say she come arter some o' dat money what young Mars' Jeems done los'."

"What else?"

"Dat was all."

Ommirandy's gaze followed Simon as he started to leave the room.

"Simon always was a good boy," she murmured.

"You can remain," said the judge, and Simon stood by.

"Call the next witness," again commanded the court, and Ommirandy's eyes shone as Lucille took the witness-stand, with her father standing by her.

"Lord bless de little section!" said Ommirandy audibly, regarding Lucille with admiring regard.

Yes. Her name was Lucille. She was her father's only child. She was ten years old. She thought she understood the nature of an oath. Some oaths meant to curse and swear. An oath in court meant to tell the truth. Yes, she knew what would happen if you did not tell the truth. You would go to the bad place when you die.

"She's entirely competent," said the judge. "Go on."

In response to the prosecuting attorney's questions, Lucille continued.

Her father had bought this new home on the river, and had brought her mother and herself down to see if they liked it. She liked it very much. It was so different from the house they lived in in the West. She hoped her father would always stay there. Yes, she had seen the prisoner before. That was one evening in the library at home. It was almost dusk. She had gone into the room, and had thought her visitor was a gnome. She had never seen a gnome before, but there were so many strange things at Kingsmill she had never seen before that she was not surprised to find a gnome there. She was not pretty enough for a fairy and was not small enough for a leprechawn. So she must be a gnome. At one time she had thought she was a ghost. Then she had told her about young Mars' Jeems and Little Mr. William, and she had said that her name was Ommirandy.

The oldest man on the jury, who sat nearest the witness-chair, looked at the child with tenderness in his eyes. Her prattle about fairies and gnomes stirred in him elusive memories of his lost youth. The other jurymen listened with rapt attention.

Yes, continued Lucille. It was the old woman over there. She had turned on the electric light and had seen her and talked to her. She had never heard a name like Ommirandy's. Her visitor had been very kind and friendly, but had said that everything there was not her father's but belonged to young Mars' Jeems. Then Ommirandy had told her that she, Lucille, was a "section," and that Little Mr. William was a section, too.

She had not known what to think about all this, because she knew that her father had bought the place and that it was theirs, and she could not think what a section might be. No, she had not seen Ommirandy take anything.

The commonwealth's attorney listened patiently to the child's artless talk.

"De Lord bless her purty heart!" murmured Ommirandy, still gazing at her.

Simon stood and listened with bowed head and downcast eyes.

"How long was she there?" asked the commonwealth's attorney.

"Oh, I don't know!" replied Lucille. "Until the automobile horn blew. I was sorry that she would not stay to see my father and mother."

"And you say you did not see her take anything from the desk?"

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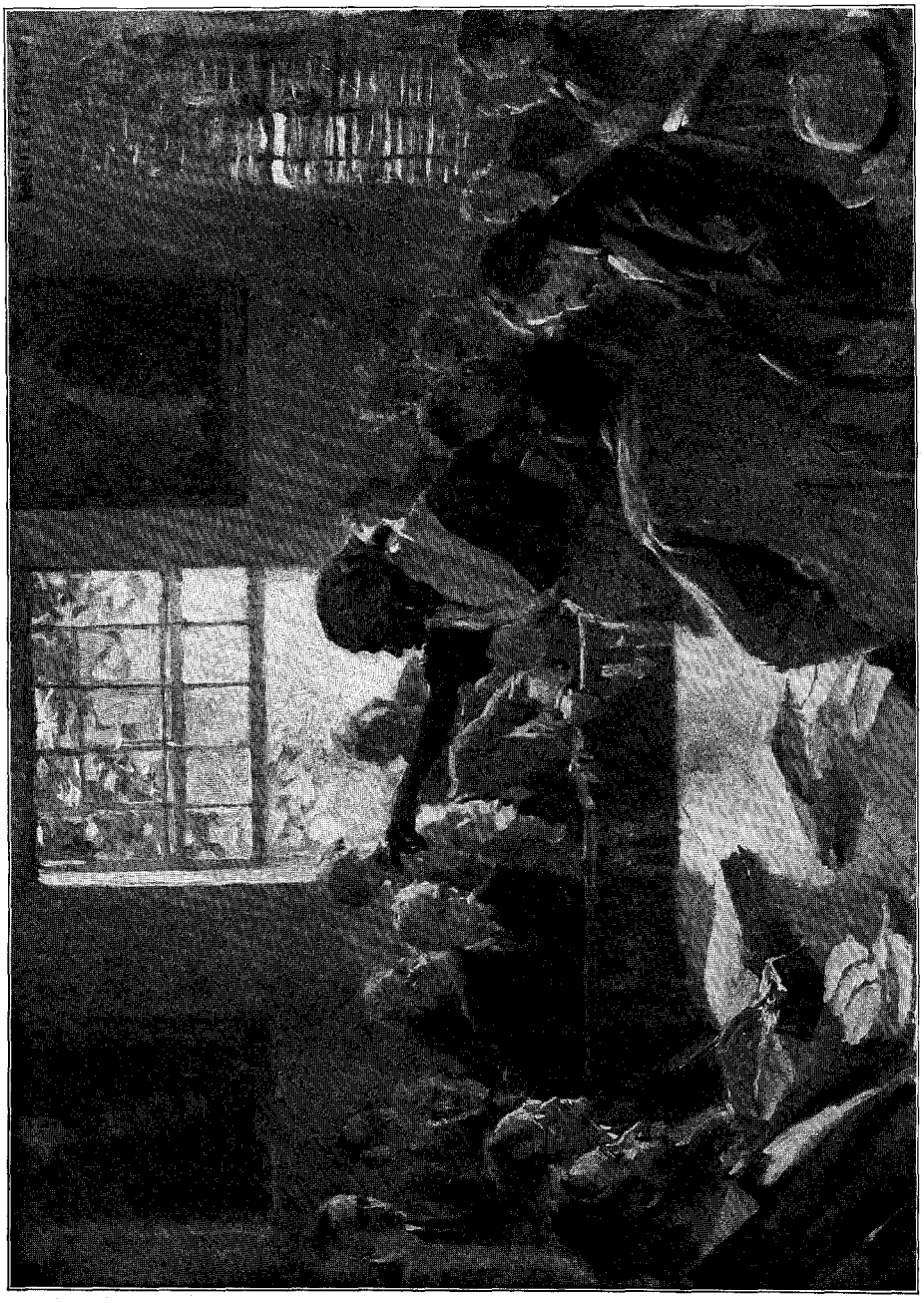

Drawn by Walter Biggs.

"Don't ye look at me, white man," said Ommirandy scornfully. "I ain't tetched nothin' what belong ter you."—Page 772.

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"Take anything from the desk?" repeated Lucille. "Not a thing in the world. She wouldn't take anything that she did not think she had a right to. I am sure she is a good gnome."

The court-house smiled.

"Did you tell any one of her visit?"

"Certainly," said Lucille; "I told my father and my mother. My father did not like her coming there, but I said to him that if he had lived there all his life, and had to go away, he would want to come back and see the place again, as she did."

Lucille was calm and collected. She looked at the gnome sympathetically.

"I did not know until yesterday that she was going to be tried. I would have begged my father not to try her," said Lucille.

The lawyer for the prisoner again declined to cross-examine.

"You can stand aside," said the commonwealth's attorney.

Then addressing the court, he said:

"If your honor please, we rest the case."

"Call the first witness for the defence," said the court, and her lawyer asked Ommirandy to take the witness-stand.

"Jedge, can't I talk down here?" she queried. "My ole legs is too short fur ter git up in dat high cheer, wid all dem niggers up dar in de gallery waitin' ter laugh at me."

The gallery responded with subdued merriment.

The court gave the desired permission, and Ommirandy, in response to her lawyer's request that she tell the court what she had to say, arose and addressed the judge and jury.

Young Mars' Jeems leaned back in his seat, and with apprehensive forebodings of what was coming, listened to her. He could already imagine her, old and worn in faithful service, clad in the penitentiary stripes. Her counsel hung his head and looked helpless and hopeless. Simon was shuffling uneasily where he stood in the audience; and Lucille, again holding her father's hand, gazed at the gnome with rapt attention.

"Cote, an' gennulmen," said the prisoner, reaching into her pocket beneath the big apron. "I don't want ter git dat little gell inter no trouble. God bless her purty face. Ole Ommirandy ain't nuvver gwine ter furgit her, no matter what happens. She didn' see me git it, but I got it! Dat's what I done tell Simon. I come down ter Kingsmill fur ter git some o' dat money what young Mars' Jeems done los'. Dis here is what I tuk out'n young Mars' Jeems's des' in de liberry. It's young Mars' Jeems's des', an' his liberry, an' his house, what his white folks is done owned fur hunnerds o' years. An' dis is young Mars' Jeems's money. I come down dar fur ter git it fur ter sen' Little Mr. William ter college at Williamsbu'g, whar all on 'em done been goin' ter college since dey lived at Kingsmill. I done hear ole mars' tell mis' 'bout it. Dey 'bleeged ter go—an' dey gwi' keep on goin' fur hunnerds o' years mo'."

She held up her right hand. It grasped a little package wrapped in an old piece of newspaper and tied with a twine string.

"Dem gennulmen, dar in de box, dey knows 'bout Kingsmill, an' de boys a-gwine ter college. I done seed some o' you-all a-drinkin' mint-julicks at Kingsmill. Ain't I, marster?"

The oldest juryman nodded in acquiescence. The court listened intently. It was an unusual case. The commonwealth's attorney gazed with wondering look at the old woman. Young Mars' Jeems's countenance took on an elusive and shadowy smile. Out of the confusion of it all, light was beginning to dawn on him. Ommirandy's lawyer was nervously writing his name over and over again with a stub-pencil on a piece of paper lying upon the bar.

"Now, cote," continued Ommirandy, "Dis here is all I got ter say 'fo' I sets down. I tuk dis here very money dat I got in my han' out'n dat des'. I done it, an' I ain't got nothin' fur ter say agin' it. Simon tell de trufe, an' de little gell she tell de trufe. I jes' want ter say one mo' thing, jedge, an' den I gwi' quit. I ain't no fool. What I wants ter see, is my Little Mr. William an' dat little gell git married some o' dese here times. Den he gwi' git back all what belongs ter him, an' he gwi' git her, too; an' Lord, Mars' Cote, an' all o' ye, jes' think o' what she gwi' git!"

No sound was audible in the court-house save the voice of Ommirandy testifying.

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She paused and looked about her, until her gaze rested again on the fair young face of Lucille.

"De little gell, de purty little section, she gwi' git my Little Mr. William, young Mars' Jeems's onlies' son. Yas, sir. She gwi' git Little Mr. William, de fus' section in de lan', an' de bes'. Jedge, don't you think hit's a good thing what ole Jedge Roan tell ole mars' befo' de war? He say it's fine fur de sections ter git tergether. He drink de bride's healf, when his daughter marry de rich gennulman f'om up Norf. He say fur de sections ter git tergether, Mars' Roan did."

The story was not unfamiliar to his honor.

"Silence in cote!" yelled the sheriff, hammering with iron poker on iron stove.

"Come along!" called the excited negroes in the gallery. "Yes, Lord! Come along!"

The atmosphere, under the influence of Ommirandy's speech, became that of a religious revival. It was electrical. The men in the jury-box turned around with wondering faces and looked up at the judge on the bench above them.

The judge looked out of the window.

"You take it, jedge," said Ommirandy; and the sheriff received from her hand the paper-covered package and handed it up to the court. "Dat ain't no gole-money, what dey excuse me o' stealin' in dat paper dat man been readin'. Look at it!"

At the words "gold money," the clear, eager voice of Lucille was heard above the subsiding din.

"I knew the gnome wouldn't take anything of ours, father. She didn't get it. I put the gold money in the little bag in my bureau drawer, to keep until I could buy the pony. It is there now. I heard you tell my mother it was for me to buy my pony on my birthday."

"This is three hundred and fifty dollars in bills," said the court. "They are pinned together with a memorandum in pencil, 'Carriage horses.'"

"I wonder where the old idiot found it?" said young Mars' Jeems. "I put it away somewhere and never could remember."

"I heerd ye say ye done los' it, an' I heerd ye say ye didn't have no money fur ter sen' Little Mr. William ter college," said Ommirandy. "Dat's how come I come back fur ter look fur it. I foun' it in de little drawer in de right-han' top o' de des' in de liberry."

"This confusion in court must stop!" said his honor. "The sheriff will clear the court-house unless better order is kept."

"Shall I call my character witnesses?" queried Ommirandy's lawyer with renewed courage.

"It isn't necessary," said the court. "The indictment charges the larceny of gold coin. These are treasury notes that the prisoner took, and they apparently belong to the former owner of Kingsmill."

"We rest," said Ommirandy's lawyer.

"Thank God, we duz!" said Ommirandy, sitting down. "I gittin' tired o' all dis here foolishness."

"You gentlemen of the jury can find a verdict without retiring from the box," said the court, addressing the jury.

The gray-headed juryman nearest the witness-stand glanced at his fellows, and arising responded:

"Not guilty, your honor!"

Each juryman nodded in acquiescence.

"Cote, your honah," queried Ommirandy, "kin I say one word?"

The judge smilingly bowed permission.

"Jedge an' gennulmen," she said, arising again, "ye done tuk keer o' young Mars' Jeems here, an' dat was de main thing. Ye done saved his money. I ain't pestered 'bout nothin' else. An', cote an' gennulmen, lemme tell ye! I knowed when dat college was gwine ter open, an' I was gwine ter 'sprise young Mars' Jeems. Dat what I hunted fur de money fur, so Little Mr. William could git his eddication, lak de balance on 'em.

"An' ef Mirandy live long enough, she gwine ter see ter it dat dem two little sections gits tergether, jedge, an' save de Union."

"The prisoner is discharged," said his honor, again looking out of the window.

It may be added that some years later Ommirandy, very old but very happy, stood near the young bride in the library at Kingsmill, when Lucille married Little Mr. William. But that, also, is another story.

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A FEAST OF TABERNACLES

By John Finley

ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN H. BLASHFIELD

THIS shall ye do, O men of earth,
Ye who've forgotten your far birth,
Your forbears of the slanting skull,
Barbaric, brutal, sluggard, dull,
(Of whom no portraits hang to boast
The ancient lineage of the host),—
Ye who've forgot the time when they
Were redolent of primal clay,
Or lived in wattled hut, or cave,
But, turned to dust or drowned by wave,
Have left no traces on Time's shores
Save mounds of shells at their cave doors
And lithic knives and spears and darts
And savage passions in our hearts;
This shall ye do: seven days each year
Ye shall forsake what ye hold dear;
From fields of taméd fruits and flowers,
From love-lit homes and sky-built towers,
From palaces and tenements
Ye shall go forth and dwell in tents,
In tents, and booths of bough-made roofs,
Where ye may hear the flying hoofs
Of beasts long gone, the cries of those
Who were your father's forest foes,
Or see their shadows riding fast
Along the edges of the past;—
All this, that ye may keep in mind
The nomad way by which mankind
Has come from his captivity,
Walking dry-shod the earth-wide sea,
Riding the air, consulting stars,
Driving great caravans of cars,
Building the furnace, bridge and spire
Of earth-control and heav'n desire,
Rising in journey from the clod
Into the glory of a god.

This shall ye do, O men of earth,
That ye may know the crownéd worth
Of what ye are—and hope renew,
Seeing the road from dawn to you.

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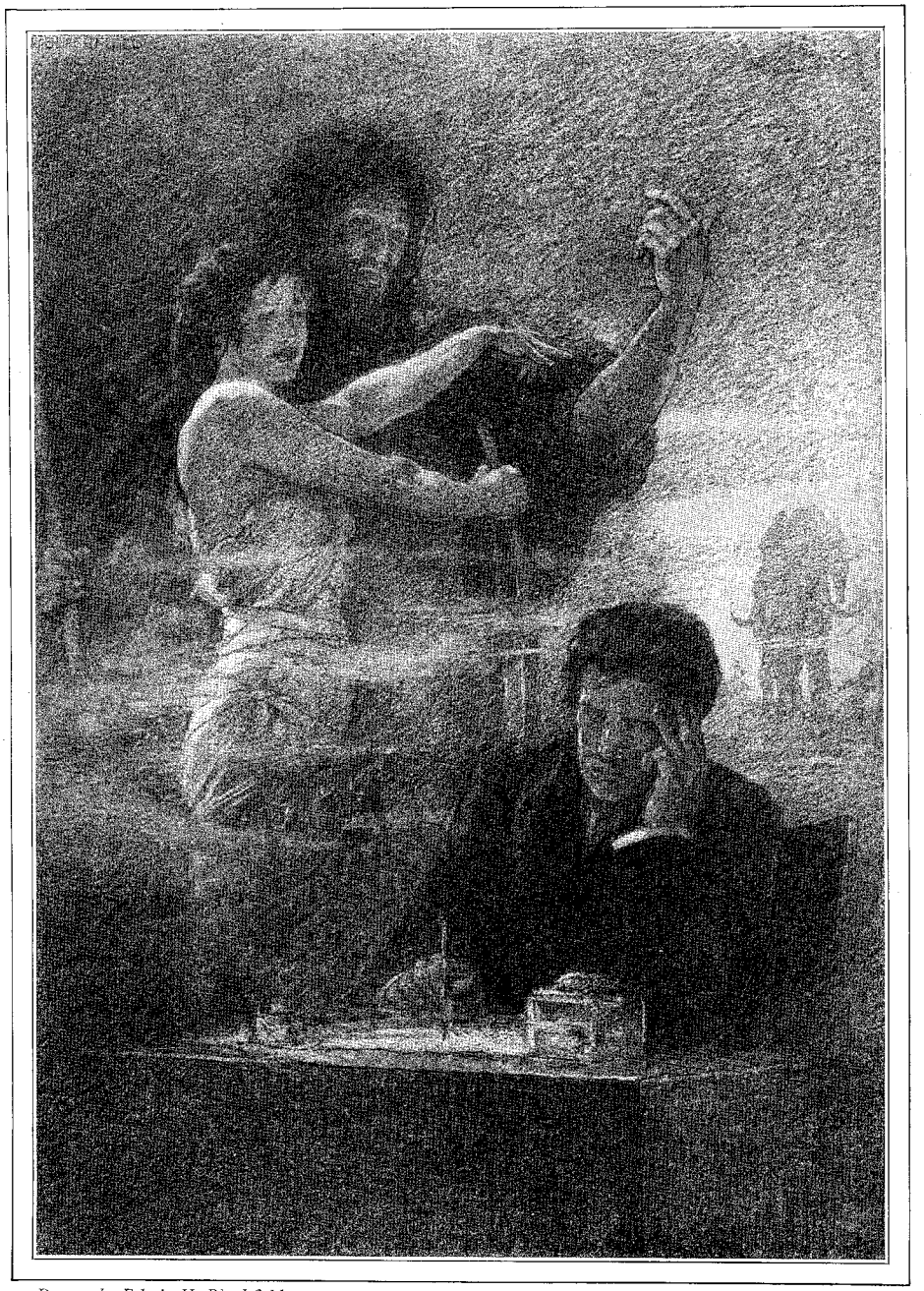

Drawn by Edwin H. Blashfield.

All this, that ye may keep in mind
The nomad way by which mankind
Has come from his captivity.

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CITY OF LIGHTS

By Gordon Arthur Smith

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALONZO KIMBALL

NOT far from Paris in miles, but leagues away in spirit, is the village of Evremont-sur-Seine. A line of silvery poplars marches by it in single file, sentinels of the sleeping river; and behind it stretch cultivated fields, green and gold at harvest-time, rolling gently away to the low horizon. December frosts and March winds and April rains have pleasingly modified the color scheme that man, in his arrogance, originally decreed for the houses of Evremont. The tiles of the roofs glow red in the sun, but the walls that once were stark white have now taken to themselves the subtler pastel shades of a rainbow. They seem to have caught and held the hues of the thousands of suns that have set in their sight.

The cobbled streets twist at random through the village, ending their haphazard careers sedately enough at the Place de la Fontaine, the public square and market-place, which takes the name from a watering-trough, and not from the great French fabler. In this square, above the watering-trough, an enterprising humane society has placed the only touch of modernity in Evremont—an enamel sign bearing in white letters on a blue ground the warning: "*Soyez bon pour les animaux.*" I wonder if that admonition is necessary: I wonder if the inhabitants of Evremont are not instinctively "good to the animals." My friend, Monsieur Silvestre, assures me that they are.

Monsieur Silvestre is landlord of the Café du Levant, which stands on the square and naïvely faces the church. That the church does not resent its proximity, however, is made evident by the fact that Monsieur le curé is a frequent client of the café; indeed, he and Monsieur Silvestre are very intimate friends. Differing as they emphatically do in faith and in politics, they are alike in each having a big heart and a fondness for dark beer.

I was not surprised, then, to find them, one clean, cool day in late April, sitting together under the weather-beaten awning on the sidewalk in front of the Café du Levant. I had been talking with Madame Nicolas and her wistful-eyed daughter, Véronique. Madame Nicolas manages a little shop behind the church and Véronique manages Madame Nicolas. At the shop are to be bought all the tender, significant symbols dear to the true believer of the Roman Church—crucifixes of ebony and of ivory; prie-dieu intricately carved by hands both zealous and devout; altar-cloths over the embroidery of which convent sisters have wearied their eyes that God might be the better glorified; rosaries worn smooth by trembling, praying fingers; madonnas gazing with prophetic eyes from Gothic frames; missals bound in vellum as white as the souls of the children that have held them; candlesticks of gleaming brass, polished anew by Madame Nicolas or by Véronique; small statues of angels, of martyrs, of prophets, and of saints, and wreaths of artificial flowers to honor the graves of the dead. Not all of these objects are beautiful—many of them, indeed, the newer ones, are glaringly ugly. But Madame Nicolas has no favorites; she yearns over them all.

Living and loving and working in such surroundings, it is not strange that Madame Nicolas has become imbued with something of their gentleness and simplicity. She is a quiet-eyed old lady, whose white hair is brushed smoothly back under her white cap, whose motherly bosom is crossed by the ends of a black, knitted shawl, whose feet tread the dim aisles of her shop in noiseless felt slippers, and whose hands are worn and lined from serving her neighbors and her Lord.

During my short stay at Evremont I had been a frequent visitor at Madame Nicolas's shop, sometimes making a trifling purchase, more often acquiring noth-

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Drawn by Alonzo Kimball.

"Diane was a good child, but she was more—how shall I say it?—more mortal."—Page 783.

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ing more tangible than a certain serenity of mind which is not to be bought. In my profession as artist Madame Nicolas valued me overhighly, I fear; but I console myself with the reflection that I was able to point out to her several articles in her possession, the real value of which (to an antiquarian, at least) she had sadly underrated. Thus, perhaps, the benefits were not entirely on one side.

I had come, then, from the shop of Madame Nicolas on an April day, and crossing the square to the Café du Levant had discovered Monsieur Silvestre and the curé sitting behind two tall glasses of dark beer.

"Good afternoon, Monsieur Craddock," said the curé; "the day is fine and the beer is good; will you not join us?"

"The beer is always good at the Café du Levant," I answered, with a bow to Monsieur Silvestre.

"That remark," observed the curé with a smile, "will surely serve to cement the *entente cordiale*."

Monsieur Silvestre indicated his pleasure by placing an iron chair for me at the table and calling loudly for the waiter.

"*C'est le patron qui paye*," said he.

"You will ruin yourself," I objected.

"Bah! It is not every day that we have, gathered here together, such an illustrious trio. Commerce, the Church, and the Fine Arts!"

"You have reason to say it," agreed the curé. "And in such a case, I may add without offence, I hope, to Monsieur Craddock—in such a case it is usually Commerce that pays for the beer." Saying which, he raised his glass to his lips, emptied it, and set it back on the table with a sigh of satisfaction.

"You have come from Madame Nicolas?" queried Monsieur Silvestre.

I admitted that I had.

"An excellent woman," said he.

"A sermon without words," said the curé.

"An unhaloed saint," suggested Monsieur Silvestre.

The priest held up his hand.

"Rarer than that," he declared; "for she is a saint that strives to live rightly rather than to die nobly. That is the essence of Christianity."

"I am no Catholic," said Monsieur Silvestre, "but I know and respect a good woman when I see one. Madame Nicolas has had a hard life. It is well that she has a faith."

The curé smiled quietly and passed a hand across his smooth chin.

"Must one be afflicted to believe?" he murmured. "Pray, then, Monsieur Silvestre, to be afflicted."

"That does not follow—" began the landlord vehemently, when, foreseeing a dispute, I ventured to interrupt.

"You say that Madame Nicolas has had a hard life. Might I inquire how, and why?"

At this Monsieur Silvestre and the curé exchanged questioning glances; and Monsieur Silvestre nodded his head.

"Tell him the story," he said.

The curé, shifting his glass, studied the wet ring it left on the iron table. Then he replaced it carefully and accurately and crossed his hands in his lap.

"Yes," he said slowly, "there is a story."

I settled myself to listen. Monsieur Silvestre drew a packet of tobacco from his pocket and dexterously rolled himself a cigarette. Then he, too, settled himself to listen, but as one who has heard the story before and is prepared to interrupt if the telling of it be not to his satisfaction.

"Madame Nicolas," began the curé, "is not a woman who cries out her troubles from the house-tops. She has never come to me to complain of her fate, but she has come often to me for advice and counsel. The greater part of what I am about to tell you I had from Véronique; and I need not assure you that I am betraying no confidences. All Evremont, alas! knows the story.

"Madame Nicolas's husband, an educated man, a government official in the post-office department here at Evremont, died about ten years ago——"

"Nine," corrected Monsieur Silvestre.

"Died, then, nine years ago, leaving Madame Nicolas with two daughters and a mere shadow of a pension. The girls were nearly of an age—Véronique at that time was eleven and Diane was a scant year younger."

"Eleven months younger," volunteered Monsieur Silvestre.

"Exactly," agreed the curé. "Well,

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they were delightful little children, both of them. I instructed them for their first communion—how well I remember! Véronique was very pious—she wrapped herself up in her faith as in a shining, white mantle; and she hid her eyes that they might not look on evil. Such unquestioning belief I had never before seen. I was afraid for her; her feet were not fixed upon the earth.

"Diane was different. Diane was a good child, but she was more—how shall I say it?—more mortal. Her little sins were like yours and mine. She overate, she lost her temper at times, she made malicious speeches, she lied once or twice, she adored, but occasionally disobeyed, her mother—you know, all harmless, natural little offences which she instantly and deeply regretted. I remember that she especially enjoyed setting the dog after the cows down in the pasture by the river. She told me with tears streaming down her cheeks that in spite of herself, in spite of her knowledge that it was wrong, she derived a very unholy pleasure from seeing the poor cows racing madly about the field with the dog barking at their heels. And she had no sooner confessed to this horrible depravity than she commenced to laugh at the recollection of the scene. Oh, yes, she was very human! She was a source of great grief to Véronique, who feared for the loss of her soul. But Madame Nicolas did not worry—or if she did it was not about Diane. Madame Nicolas had started her shop, then, and was earning enough to keep them all clothed and fed, with a little to set aside at the end of each year as a dowry for the two girls. You see she wanted them to be in a position to marry well when the time should come.

"Véronique did not want to marry. She wanted to enter a convent and take the veil. Both Madame Nicolas and I—God forgive me—discouraged her in the desire. At least we urged her to wait—to make no hasty decision. And she waited. And while she waited there came, of course, a man. A man or the devil always comes when a woman is waiting."

"Sometimes both," suggested Monsieur Silvestre.

"In this case," said the curé, "it was both—the devil in the form of a man."

The curé hesitated and sighed. It was only too evident that this part of the story distressed him, that he shrank from putting the baseness of the world into words. But I don't know whether it was grief or anger that troubled his voice when he continued.

"The man," he said, "was a lieutenant in a Zouave regiment that was quartered near Evremont during some manœuvres. He was very handsome in scarlet and blue with shining buttons and epaulets. And he had large brown eyes and a gallant black mustache. And he ranged the world like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour. I will say no more. He is dead, and *de mortuis nil*—well, you know the phrase. I forget my Latin."

"*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*," supplied Monsieur Silvestre, greatly to my surprise; and then he added reproachfully: "You have never forgotten it before."

The curé shrugged.

"Let us get on with the story," he said. "At first Véronique met this lieutenant of Zouaves—his name was Max Tourelle—openly and with the knowledge of Madame Nicolas and myself. But we mistrusted him from the beginning—he was too handsome, too swaggering for our taste. Véronique believed in him implicitly, and when he spoke of love to her she hugged his words to her heart. And she gave over her soul from God's keeping into his. Madame Nicolas pleaded with her; I pleaded with her; Diane cried herself to sleep every night. But Véronique did not cry. She was eighteen and very much in love and we seemed to her like mourners at a feast. She could not understand our attitude.

"One night—the night the camp broke up and the regiment was ordered back to the city—she stole out of the house, joined him, and ran away with him to Paris to be married. . . . Of course he did not marry her."

"He left her and she came back to Evremont?" I asked.

The curé shook his head.

"No," he said, "he did not leave her, and she did not come back to Evremont for a long time."

"Poor Madame Nicolas," I murmured.

"Poor Véronique," said Monsieur Silvestre.

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"Poor Diane," said the curé, and seemed to enjoy my mystification.

There was a short silence.

"Well," urged Monsieur Silvestre impatiently, "continue."

"I continue," said the curé. "The next morning Madame Nicolas came to me at sunrise. I am ashamed to say I was still in bed; but I threw on my soutane in haste and received her. She was very white, I remember, and she was trembling; but she did not break down.

"'I have lost my daughter,' she said—'I have lost Véronique.' And then she repeated it again: 'I have lost my daughter—I have lost Véronique.'

"That was all she said; but I knew, of course, what had happened. I had feared it.

"I quoted no scripture to console her, although a hundred phrases came to my lips. I took her by the hand and led her out to my little garden where we could see the sun coming up behind the hills and the morning breeze stirring the poplars by the river. And I said: 'Madame Nicolas, do you see the sun?' and she answered: 'Yes.' And I said: 'Madame Nicolas, do you see the river and the trees and the grass with the wind upon them?' And she answered: 'Yes.' And I said: 'Do you see the clouds, rose and mauve and gray, and the stars paling up there in the sky?' And she again answered: 'Yes.'

"Then I said: 'Madame Nicolas, God is watching over the sun and it is his will that it shall rise; and God is watching over the river and it is his will that it shall flow to the sea; and God is watching over the trees and the grass and it is his will that the wind shall be upon them; and God is watching over the clouds and the stars, and as they are, so he wills that they shall be. Do you not, then, believe that God is watching over your daughter and that his will shall be done?' "

The curé paused and Monsieur Silvestre, much affected but eager to prove his iconoclasm, said: "That is all very well, but, after all, the sun and the river and the trees and the clouds and the stars are coming to no harm. It is only we poor mortals that have to look out for ourselves. Where should we land if we did not?—I ask you."

The curé regarded him scornfully.

"I was speaking at the time to a Catholic," he said, "not to a heretic. Heretics must look out for themselves; for I am not sure just how much interest le Bon Dieu takes in them."

Perceiving that Monsieur Silvestre had a spirited retort at his lips, I interposed quickly, begging the curé to proceed.

"Well, Madame Nicolas went home comforted, and in ten days she received a little note from Véronique. I remember the words of it as well as I remember the *Pater Noster*. She said: 'I am in Paris with Max and am very happy. Yesterday we went up the Eiffel Tower. We are to be married very soon. I adore Paris and I worship Max. Do not worry about me, for I am completely happy. That is to say, I shall be completely happy if you forgive me.'

"Madame Nicolas tried to obtain comfort from the assurance that they were to be married soon. As for me, I fear I was not so trusting; for I saw in Véronique's repeated assertion that she was happy merely a defiant endeavor to persuade herself that she was not horribly unhappy. There are times when I am no optimist. That is perhaps because it has been my blessed privilege for many years to minister unto misery.

"Poor Véronique had not dared to give her address in the letter, and it was a long time before we were able to locate her. Paris is a large city, and the Véroniques in it do not make themselves conspicuous. Finally, at the request of Madame Nicolas, who was only too willing to forgive, I myself went in search of the girl. It was not my first visit to Paris, messieurs. No, indeed, I have travelled a great deal: I have been three times to Paris and twice to Lyons and it was but six years ago that I should have journeyed to Rome had not my neuralgia come upon me the day before I was to leave.

"Diane begged to accompany me. She was sure that if she might see her sister and talk with her she could persuade her to return. Véronique had always loved Diane and had never been able to say no to her in anything she desired. But I thought it better for her not to come. I think that I was wrong. If I was I can only plead that it was an error in judgment, not in intention.

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"I went alone, then, and after three days I found Véronique. She was living in a little room in a house on the Rue des Saints-Pères; and Max had not married her. During the day she worked in a *confiserie*, selling cakes and sweetmeats and earning two francs a day. That seems good pay to us here in Evremont, but I am told that it is nothing in Paris. She explained that Max was not rich and that she did not wish to be a burden to him. I was able to perceive immediately (although she tried bravely to conceal her misgivings) that she doubted if he would ever marry her. The surprise of seeing me broke down her guard and she wept on my shoulder. She had come at last to realize the importance of what she had done; but, quite naturally, she still clung to Max as her salvation. Her only hope lay in him. And it was against this hope that springs eternal that I was forced to fight. I lost the fight."

"That was but natural," observed Monsieur Silvestre. "Max had it in his power to make her an honest woman by marrying her: he could undo what he had done, but you could not. You could but offer her consolation and spiritual absolution."

"Precisely," agreed the curé. "I came to her either too soon or too late. Had I come sooner I might have been in time to save her; had I come later she would have had opportunity to become convinced that Max was a scoundrel, and I could have won her away from him. As it was I came back to Evremont, my hands empty, but my heart full to overflowing.

"A year passed, and two years. Madame Nicolas, uncomplaining and dignified in her sorrow, tended the little shop with Diane; and every night they prayed to the Mother of God to be kind to Véronique and to remember that she was very young. And Madame Nicolas suddenly seemed to grow very old.

"On a certain night Madame Nicolas had a dream. At the time we both thought it a divine revelation, but subsequent events caused us to doubt that it emanated from heaven. So we have since called it simply a dream."

"Ha!" exclaimed Monsieur Silvestre, "you pretend to claim——"

"I claim nothing," interrupted the curé severely. "I state our belief—no more. I have a right to a belief; you, who are an agnostic, have not; you cannot, even, believe that you are an agnostic, for an agnostic is one who believes nothing."

Monsieur Silvestre found no answer and the curé continued.

"Madame Nicolas dreamed that night that she saw Véronique and Diane together, clasped in each other's arms. Véronique was weeping bitterly and Diane was soothing her and comforting her and stroking her bright hair with gentle, sisterly hands. And Véronique was crying because she had lost the little silver cross that had hung on a slender chain at her breast since the day of her first communion. Then, in the dream, Madame Nicolas saw Diane unclasp her own little silver cross and give it to Véronique. And when she had done so she went very white and buried her face in her hands and wept. But Véronique, seeing her sister's distress, refused at first to take the cross; and it was not until Diane, between her sobs, had urged her and pleaded with her for a long time that she consented to do so. Then she clasped the chain at her neck and peace came into her eyes and she was comforted.

"Madame Nicolas the next morning told Diane of her dream and they agreed that it had come from le Bon Dieu, that it clearly meant that Diane should go to Paris and see her sister and cheer her and prevail on her to come back to Evremont and be forgiven. Diane, conscious of her power with Véronique, was enthusiastic and eager to start at once. She had no fear of the city, nor would she hear of Madame Nicolas or myself accompanying her. She pointed out that in the dream she had been alone with Véronique, that this was obviously the desire of le Bon Dieu, and that to disregard his manifest wish would be to show ourselves ungrateful and might well displease him. In the end she convinced us that she was right.

"The next day we put her on the train for Paris. I gave her minute directions how she should find Véronique, but she scarcely heeded them. Le Bon Dieu, she said, would show her the way and guard her steps. She was so happy, so confident of her success, that we could not but share some of her elation."

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The curé paused to moisten his lips and drain his glass. Monsieur Silvestre, for once, made no comment.

"What happened in Paris," the curé resumed, "I had from Véronique. Diane, arriving at the Gare Saint-Lazare at ten o'clock——"

"At ten-seven," corrected Monsieur Silvestre.

"Diane, arriving at ten-seven, went straight to the *confiserie* and found her sister with no delay whatever. I can imagine the meeting. It is certain that there were many kisses and a few tears. It is good for the young to cry a little.

"Véronique immediately requested and obtained a half-holiday. The *patronne* was big-hearted and had a sister of her own, in Dijon, whom she had not seen for seven years. I think the *patronne* shed a few tears, too, from sympathy.

"Véronique and Diane walked out of the shop, with their arms about each other's waists, just as they used to walk to the pasture down here by the river, when they were little girls. And it seemed to them, for a while, at least, as if nothing had changed, nothing had come between them since those far-away days. But once or twice Véronique would stop short in the middle of a laugh and once or twice her fingers would seek Diane's and press them so hard that it hurt.

"Véronique led the way to her room in the Rue des Saint-Pères, for she wanted to change from her working-clothes into her best dress. She wanted, you see, to make it a *jour de fête*.

"'You will stop the night here with me, Diane, will you not?' she asked.

"Diane did not hesitate an instant.

"'It will be better, Véronique, if we both go back to Evremont this evening. I have come to bring you home.'

"But Véronique shrank away.

"'No,' she said slowly, 'I cannot go home.'

"Diane threw herself to her knees in front of her sister.

"'We are breaking our hearts waiting for you,' she said. 'It is for our sake that we ask you to come. Have pity.'

"But Véronique shook her head.

"'I cannot leave Max.'

"'Our mother is getting old,' urged Diane. 'She needs you. The two years that you have been gone have seemed very long and bitter to her.'

"'So have they seemed to me,' said Véronique, but so low that Diane scarce heard her. 'Come,' she continued, 'let us not spoil our one day together. We will discuss it to-morrow. Meanwhile I shall show you many wonderful things, for Paris is a beautiful city—especially in April when the sun is shining.'

"Diane then saw that for the present she could gain nothing by persevering. So she determined to bide her time patiently. She did not despair for an instant.

"While she washed her hands and face, her sister got into a beautiful gown. It was blue, I think, and had some marvellous lace at the neck and wrists. Max had bought it for her in a shop on the Rue de Rivoli. Diane had never seen its equal before, and I am afraid that she looked on it with covetous eyes. Diane, as I told you, was very human.

"When they were ready Véronique took her sister's hand and they went out into the streets. They walked for miles. They saw the Louvre and the Vendôme column and Notre Dame. When they stopped in front of Notre Dame, Diane gave a little gasp and the tears started to her eyes. It was so beautiful that it made her cry. And, without thinking, she begged that they go in to pray.

"Véronique drew sharply away that Diane might not see her face.

"'Come,' she said; 'we will not go in.'

"But her voice trembled so much that Diane understood.

"They turned and walked up the *quai* beside the swollen river.

"'Look,' said Diane, 'it is the same dear old Seine that flows by the pasture at home where the cows are. Do you remember how one could see the reflections of the poplars marching along in it upside down? Do you remember how blue it was at noon, and how silver it was at evening?'

"'Yes,' said Véronique. 'In Paris it is neither blue nor silver very often.'

"They purchased a lunch at a bakery and ate it under the trees in the Tuileries, like the *midinettes*. Then they crossed the Place de la Concorde and Véronique pointed out the monument of Alsace-

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Drawn by Alonzo Kimball.

"He was very gay and dashing and cracked a great many funny jokes that set Diane laughing in spite of herself."—Page 788.

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Lorraine and the wreaths with which a bereaved nation had dressed it.

"'There are flowers in front of your picture at home,' said Diane. But Véronique answered nothing.

"They walked slowly up the Champs-Elysées, watching the automobiles and carriages go by, filled with gay people in beautiful clothes. Diane's eyes sparkled with excitement. It was all very strange to her and beautiful and dazzling; and, as you know, the Champs-Elysées has a great *chic* in the afternoon. Before they had reached the Rond-Point a troop of the Republican Guard rode by—great giants of men, with plumes waving and cuirasses gleaming and horses fretting and tossing their heads. It was a sight to stir one's blood. Diane, in her excitement, clung close to her sister; and Véronique, who had seen it all before, laughed at her and teased her for being *une petite provinciale*.

"Then they went to a *guignol*—oh, they saw all the wonderful sights of Paris! And they both laughed a great deal and chattered merrily and enjoyed themselves just as they used to do when the circus came to Evremont.

"Presently Véronique stopped short in the middle of a laugh, caught her breath sharply, and said: 'Come, we must return to the Rue des Saints-Pères. Max will be waiting. He has promised to take me to dinner and if I am late he becomes impatient.'

"It was the first time that Véronique had alluded to Max, and Diane felt suddenly embarrassed and ill at ease. She did not know quite what to say. Véronique must have misunderstood her sister's confusion, for she said: 'You will have dinner with us, too, of course.'

"But Diane hung back.

"'There is a train for Evremont,' she said. 'I can catch it if I hurry. Oh, Véronique, *we* can catch it if we hurry!'

"Véronique shook her head.

"'Not yet,' she said gently. 'I cannot go yet, Diane. Perhaps to-morrow. We shall see. Wait until to-morrow.'

"So they returned to the Rue des Saints-Pères. Max was waiting, and he seemed not at all displeased to have an addition to their dinner-party. He was very gay and dashing and cracked a great many funny jokes that set Diane laughing in spite of herself. And he appeared to have plenty of money to spend.

"'We will dine this evening *en prince!*' he cried. 'Nothing is too good for our little country sister. Behold! I have twenty-two francs! We will spend it all—every *centime*.'

"I have forgotten the name of the restaurant where he took them to dine; but no matter, I should never have occasion to go there, myself—it is far too expensive. I know, however, that it was near the Gare du Montparnasse. A dinner cost three francs-fifty, *vin compris*. Think of the extravagance, messieurs! And Max gave a franc to the waiter as a *pourboire*. Truly, Parisians care nothing for their money!

"There was an orchestra and a great musician that played divinely on the violin. Max asked Diane if she did not want him to play some favorite tune of hers, and she clapped her hands, delighted, and begged for *Venite Adoremus*. Max laughed very loudly, but the musician had heard her and he played it. He must have played it very wonderfully, for Véronique tells me that it made her cry, although she did not want to because it always made Max angry when she cried.

"Every one in the restaurant looked around at Diane, and smiled and nudged each other and laughed because she had chosen a tune that is not played in restaurants. But the musician saw them laughing and became furious and cried: '*Canaille!* If you have no respect for good music I shall play no more.' And he packed up his violin and went out.

"There followed, of course, much excitement. The proprietor was vexed and the clients were vexed and Max was in a rage and hurried Véronique and Diane out of the café.

"He took them then to a music-hall, where they sat in the very front row of the gallery. Diane loved the performance, although she could not understand much that was said because it was mostly in the Parisian *argot*. But there was a tableau of Napoleon bidding farewell to the Old Guard that was extremely beautiful and, doubtless, of great historical interest. But the Old Guard were women in very close-fitting uniforms—which seemed strange.

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"At last Véronique clasped the chain at her neck and she was comforted."—Page 790.

"In any case the representation put Max in a good humor again, and he suggested that they go to the Panthéon for supper. At first Diane thought that he meant the Panthéon with the big dome—she had pictures of it on postal cards—and she was surprised to think that people went there for supper. But Max explained that he meant a different place altogether; he meant the Taverne du Panthéon, which is a café with music and dancing.

"Diane enjoyed herself hugely. Max met some friends from his regiment and brought them up and introduced them to her; and they asked her to dance. She danced the polka very gracefully, but they taught her some new steps that we do not dance here at Evremont. Before they knew it, it was two o'clock in the morning. Think of it, my friends!

"As they walked home by the side of the Luxembourg Gardens, Diane was quiet and sad. She felt, you see, that she had been too easily led to forget the object of her mission. She was very glad when Max said good-night to them and left them at the door of the house in the Rue des Saints-Pères; and she determined that she would not sleep that night until she should have had a long talk with Véronique and used all her persuasions.

"Véronique, holding a candle, lighted the way up the five flights of twisting stairs, and with every step Diane's heart grew heavier, for she knew that if she did not succeed in making Véronique listen to her that night, she should never succeed at all.

"When they reached the room Véronique immediately started to undress; and it was then that Diane noticed that her sister no longer wore the little silver cross about her neck. This discovery startled her and awed her, for she recalled Madame Nicolas's dream and she was sure that she saw in it the hand of God.

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"'What are you looking at, Diane?' asked Véronique.

"'You have lost your silver cross,' faltered Diane—'or is it that you no longer care to wear it?'

"Véronique instinctively put her hand to her breast, searching with her fingers. Then she desisted and nodded her head sadly.

"'I have lost it,' said she. 'The chain broke and I lost it—two years ago—the night I left Evremont. But even now I cannot realize that it is gone. Always I am feeling for it; and always it is not there; and always I am surprised until I remember—until I remember. Oh, Diane, I wish that I might never remember; I wish I were of those that can forget!'

"With that she threw herself on the bed and commenced to sob bitterly. Diane went to her and took her in her arms and soothed her and comforted her and stroked her bright hair with gentle, sisterly hands. And, even as Madame Nicolas had dreamed, she unclasped her own little silver cross from about her neck and gave it to Véronique. And when she had done so she went very white and buried her face in her hands and wept. But she did not know why she wept, for she was really glad that Véronique should have the cross.

"Then, again, as in the dream, Véronique refused at first to take the gift. Diane urged her and pleaded with her to do so, and at last Véronique clasped the chain at her neck and peace came into her eyes and she was comforted.

"That night, as they lay side by side in the narrow bed, Véronique said in a whisper: 'Diane, are you asleep?'

"'No,' answered Diane, 'I was praying.'

"'Were you praying for me?' asked Véronique.

"'For you—and for myself,' answered Diane.

"'Tell me more about home, Diane,' whispered Véronique. 'Tell me about the shop. Is the image of Sainte Véronique still unsold? Tell me about mother. Is she—is she very bitter against me? And tell me about the curé and Monsieur Silvestre and the church and the Café du Levant and the Place de la Fontaine. Do the sparrows still come to drink at the watering-trough?'

"So Diane told her everything she wished to know. She told her of the little humdrum affairs of the village; she told her of the shop—that the image of Sainte Véronique still stood in the corner and that Madame Nicolas, remembering how fond Véronique had been of it, had refused to sell it; she told her of myself and of Monsieur Silvestre here; and then she told her of the peace and the calm that lie over the village like a benediction. And when she had finished Véronique sighed and kissed her and said: 'To-morrow, Diane, I will go back with you to Evremont!' Then Véronique lay back and slept like a child. But Diane slept very little.

"When Véronique awoke the next morning the first thing she did was to feel for the little cross at her breast. Her fingers found it and she smiled. Then, while she bathed and dressed, she sang—very low that she might not disturb Diane. But her heart was singing loudly. She packed the few trifles that she had brought with her when she left Evremont two years ago—nothing more—and when all was ready she called Diane.

"Diane awoke and the first thing she did was to feel for the little cross at her breast. Her fingers found it not and she sighed. But Véronique was so happy that the sigh passed unobserved.

"'Come,' said Véronique, 'There is a train, is there not, at half past eight?'

"Diane delayed her dressing long enough to throw her arms about her sister's neck.

"'It is, then, really true,' said she; and she, too, seemed very happy. . . .

"Well, they took the early train. I had finished my breakfast and was in the Place, taking a breath of the fragrant morning air when I saw them coming up the street from the station. I ran to them and embraced them both. Mon Dieu, how I rejoiced at the miracle, and I remembered, but did not repeat, the parable of the sheep that strayed from the fold. Instead I cried aloud: 'God is good!' I could have gone on my knees in the dust of the street and given thanks——"

"It would have attracted attention," interrupted Monsieur Silvestre; but I noticed that more than once he had furtively rubbed his sleeve across his eyes, and so I judged that his irony was but a mask.

"Yes," agreed the curé, "it would have attracted attention to Véronique. That

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is why I did not. But might I, in this connection, recall to your mind, Monsieur Silvestre, what you yourself did on that day? You took every *centime* that was paid in at the Café du Levant, and when you thought no one was looking you dropped it all into my poor-box."

"Bah!" said Monsieur Silvestre. "That indicates nothing. One does not have to be religious to be sorry for the poor."

The curé smiled and shook his head.

"Monsieur Silvestre," he said, "in spite of yourself you are one of the best Christians in the diocese."

"Then God help the church!" said Monsieur Silvestre, determined to have the last word.

"He will," said the curé with conviction. "Now, Monsieur Craddock," he continued, turning to me, "I now come to the end of the story. That was, indeed, a day of rejoicing—the day that brought Véronique back to us. She seemed to fit at once into the niche that we had held for her in our hearts during her absence. She was quiet—she did not cringe, she held up her head; but one could see how grateful she was for any kindness."

"And Madame Nicolas?" said I—"Madame Nicolas, I presume, was very happy."

The curé shifted in his chair and gazed steadfastly across the square, far above the tower of his church into the clear April sky.

"Madame Nicolas," he said slowly, "was very happy for twenty-four hours."

"But—" I began, and then stopped, waiting in silence for him to proceed.

"On the very night of her return, while Véronique slept smiling beside her, Diane arose, tossed a few garments into a little cloth valise, and just as Véronique had done before her, stole from the house out into the great vast night. The city, I suppose, had got into her blood. They traced her as far as Paris, and then—they lost her. They have never heard from her since. The world has her now, and the world, alas! is not gentle."

"Stole from the house out into the great vast night."

Monsieur Silvestre cleared his throat loudly and turned his back.

"Poor Madame Nicolas," he said, and there was a break in his voice.

"Poor Diane," said the curé.

But a different thought came to me. I thought of Véronique and the burden that she bore on her slender shoulders, and, remembering the tragedy that lay dark in her eyes, I said: "Poor Véronique."

Then, for a space, we fell silent, each busy with his own thoughts. The shadow of the church tower stretched its blue length across the square, edging ever nearer to us as the sun descended the sky. The village was dreamily still, save for the voices of boatmen calling to one another on the river.

At last the curé stirred in his chair. I think that he had been praying—for one in peril on uncharted seas. He raised his head slowly, and his eyes, sweeping the west, rested on the gold cross above his little church. Behind the cross lay Paris and the setting sun.

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THE RAGGED EDGE OF FORTY

By Katharine Holland Brown

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. C. WALL

"ANY word from up-river, Molly? Can't you get Cobb's Landing?"

Plastered to his waist with yellow ditch-clay, dripping from head to heel, Jim Stirling stumbled up the rain-swept bank, and into his shack. Molly, bent over piles of time-books and vouchers, lifted a tired, intent face.

"No, dear. Are you expecting a call?"

"Why, I thought I'd told you." Jim frowned, puzzled. "Kirkland—president of the Inter-State, you know—wired that he'd be along on route inspection. He's due at Cobb's Landing this morning. That will bring him here some time to-day."

"Kirkland! The chief! On route inspection!" Molly's brown, clear eyes grew wide with dismay.

"Yes, the Great Mogul himself. Just this contract's luck, for my superior officer to hit camp when blasting and levee fills and all are stopped, dead, by high water. But don't look so distressed, Molly. Can't be helped."

"Maybe the storm will delay him, and things will be in better shape by the time he gets here."

"They couldn't be in worse shape." Grim amusement flickered in Jim's harassed eyes. "I've been hoping with all my soul that Kirkland would recommend me for the Lake Linden fill. If I could get that two years' work, I'd stand a chance of recouping this year's losses. But when he sees this job in such a ghastly mess—and if it was anybody else on earth but Kirkland! That man doesn't know what ill luck means. He's sixty-five years old, and he's been an engineer since he was twenty, and I don't believe he's fumbled a contract yet."

"I wish you knew when to expect him."

"So do I. But I dare say the wires are all down in this wind. Or else the poles are washed out of root. If this rain keeps on, all southern Illinois will be washed out of root. So will our contract. So will we. But what of that? Merely another failure——"

Stirling shut his teeth. He heaved his big body out of boots and oilskins, and stood staring blankly through the low window. Molly followed her husband's eyes. She saw a flat, gray, miry country; a broad muddy canal, rolling bank-full to the wide, gray river, half a mile below; a string of dingy house-boats, a clutter of barges, a launch or two; and, dwarfing the smaller craft, a gigantic steam-dredge. Its tall, ungainly machinery rose stark as vast sprawling pinions. Its huge bucket scooped up and down, up and down, snatching great gobbets of earth and gravel like the beak of some gigantic bird of prey. Suddenly Molly's mouth quivered. Her eyes fell shut. Week on week, all the winter through, she had looked on that dull, plodding scene. But never had she seen what she saw to-day. As if written in fire, the words flared out, scorching her tired eyes, her tired brain: "Failure—failure—failure!"

"I don't want to whine, Molly." All his bold, gay confidence had dropped out of Jim's voice. His face, always so unconquerably boyish, was suddenly gaunt and bewildered and old. "But I do feel like a chump. Think of it! Sixteen years at drainage engineering, and not one successful job yet!"

"Your jobs are always successful!" blazed Molly. Her pale face crimsoned. "Your ditches are always cut to grade, and your levees stand, and your berms hold fast. You never signed a contract yet that you didn't put through on honor. Yet you dare pretend that you've failed—" Something gripped her throat. She halted, her cheeks afire, her cold hands trembling. Jim looked at her with heavy eyes.

"You're a good sport, Molly. But I

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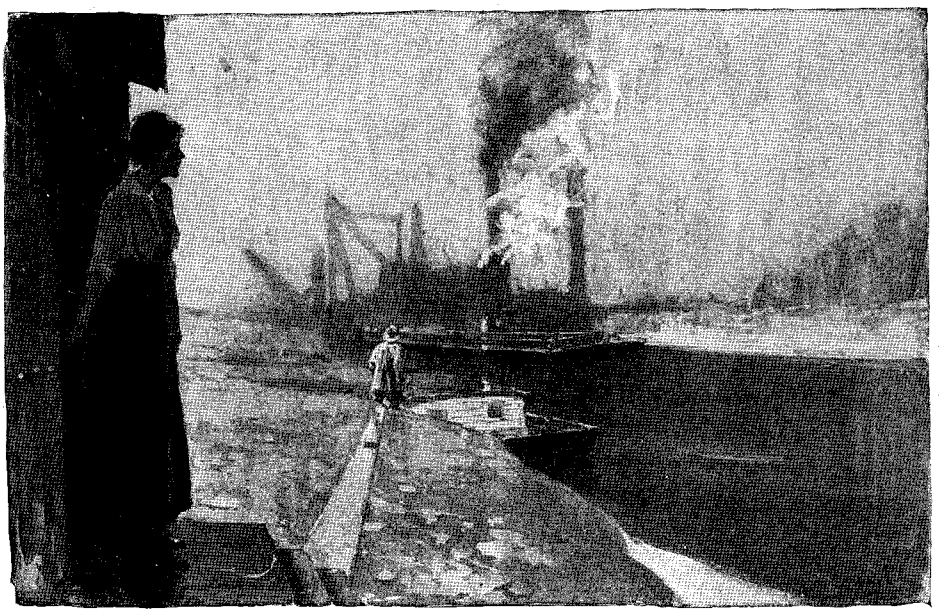

Molly watched him tramp down the oozy bank.

have not made good. You know that. If I were a younger man—but here I am, on the ragged edge of forty, this minute. When a man gets to forty, and hasn't made good—well, he never will make good. That's all."

His voice stopped on a queer gruff note. He stooped and jerked on the big mud-caked boots. "Guess I'll go back. Megaphone me if there's any word from up-river. So long!"

Molly watched him tramp down the oozy bank, then cross the board bridge to the dredge. Her cheeks whitened slowly. Her heart pounded heavily, stroke on stroke of pain. "The ragged edge of forty!" Yes, there they both stood, hard on the boundary of middle age. And when you reached forty, yet had not made good——

They had planned it all so differently! Her mind fled back to their first year together. The proud, gay splendor of it! For, boy that he was, Jim had been awarded two large contracts, and he had swung them through superbly. No dreams were too golden for that year to dare! But on the contract following he had barely come out even, because of breakdowns and delays. And the next year's work had put him six thousand dollars in debt. That disaster was never Jim's fault. No man alive could have foreseen the flood that swept out three months' costly labor in a night. And Jim had faced that downfall with royal unconcern. "Don't you care, Molly, you old peach. I'll earn it all back in a jiffy. You'll see!"

Molly had not cared a farthing's worth. Her faith in Jim's powers was a living fire. The ten years of drudgery that followed could not dim that eager flame. She had stood by Jim all the way. She had forced herself to every nettling economy. She had scrimped on herself, she had scrimped on the children, although it hurt her to the quick to deny them. Priscilla, now apple-cheeked eleven, should have begun music lessons long ago. Jim Junior, aged nine, stocky, red-headed, determined, a mechanical genius like his father, already clamored for a workshop, for tool-kits, "an' a real dynamo, 'cause I want to 'speriment in wireless." And little 'Lizabeth, her baby, her darling! How she longed to deck 'Lizabeth in laces and fine linen, like the wee fairy princess that she was! But toil as Jim might, save as she might, they had never quite fought their way out of debt.

"And by coming down here I have hindered Jim, not helped him," Molly

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thought. Yet she had come in such loving eagerness to serve! This contract was the digging of a twenty-mile drainage ditch through an isolated farming country. Jim had sublet the work from the Inter-State Engineering Company, taking full charge. That meant, Jim must "live on the work." He must tramp the soggy banks all day, overseeing both levee crews and ditch gangs; he must eat, and sleep, and make up his endless complicated reports in this ten-by-thirty shack, set on the ditch bank, where he could be called instantly from sleep, in case of trouble with the night shift. Molly, meanwhile, would stay in their quiet home town, and take care of the children, and have her breath and being on the rare Sundays that Jim could spend with her. That was the way, always. An engineer's wife learns to put up with such things. But when the contract began its career of ill fortune Molly had rebelled. She sent the children to her mother. She rented their little home. Then she went straight to Jim, and met his amazed protests with a terse ultimatum.

"No. You'll not send me home. No. I'm not afraid of mosquitoes, nor malaria, nor floods, nor drunken laborers, nor anything else. Yes, I'll manage to amuse myself. I can cook your meals and keep your books and see that you get six hours' sleep and plenty of quinine, if I can't do anything more. I'm here, mind that. And here to stay."

But now, deep in her sore heart, she knew that all her loving care meant nothing to Jim. He was too spent to realize even her dear presence. Never once did he complain of the calamities that each day brought. He pushed on, fighting his losing game with unshaken courage. Until to-day——

A furious pity surged in her breast. She locked her trembling hands. Oh, he must make good! He *must!* Not just for his own standing. Not just for her and for those darling cormorants at home. But for his own dear precious sake. For sake of his challenged soul; for sake of his sweet and confident spirit, that had never faltered till to-day.

"I won't stand it, to see him suffer. I *can't!*" She was sobbing now, uncontrollably. Her slim body swayed against the door. "It isn't fair! Oh——!"

The telephone rang sharply. Startled, she ran to the desk.

The receiver was a blur of rushing sound. At last a deep voice boomed through the clamor.

"Hello! This the Contract Camp? Well, I want Stirling. Oh, this is Mrs. Stirling? Good morning, madam. This is Kirkland speaking. Will you kindly tell Mr. Stirling that I expect to reach camp in my launch by five P. M.? Mrs. Kirkland is with me——"

Click! Then silence. Molly put up the receiver with shaky hands.

"So Kirkland, the Great, is coming, in the midst of this flood. So Jim's chief will inspect the contract at its very worst. And Mrs. Kirkland! She's the sort that's used to roughing it, of course—in Adirondack camps, with marble baths and eight servants. Well, if they stay the night, they can take our bedroom. Jim can sleep here on a cot and I'll manage with the hammock. As to meals, they'll have to eat what I can find in this wilderness. They sha'n't starve, anyhow. Here goes!"

She megaphoned her news to the dredge, then set swiftly to work. The tiny shack was always in flawless order. But to make ready a company dinner on two hours' notice, twelve miry miles from even a country grocer's, and over a crotchety two-burner gasolene stove!

Back and forth flew Molly, shuttling from piano-box kitchen to wee, crammed living-room. She set out the dainty linen and silver that she had brought to make the shack homey for Jim; Heaven be praised, there were enough spoons to go round! She planned and cooked the simple meal with the deftness of an artist. But all the fiends of mischance attended her. The ice-pick had vanished off the face of the earth. The oven door-knob whirled loose at every touch. The canned peas were savorless, the cream was dolorously thin. The chicken, sent down from a neighboring farm, proved a muscled ancient, thewed like a Spartan bull. The evil stove first smoked, then scorched, then blew up like a giant firecracker, burning the biscuits to ashes and filling the house with oily smoke. Molly had barely rescued the potatoes when she heard the shrill whistle of a launch sig-

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nalling from the river. Through the thick mist she saw a trig white motor-boat, flying a blue ensign, steer into the mouth of the canal. The Kirkland launch, of course! Breathless and scarlet-cheeked, in a dream, Molly heard herself greeting her guests with feverish welcome. A desperate desire seized her to make this forlorn hour a success at whatever cost. She led the way into the smoky living-room

He stared at Jim's gray, moveless face.—Page 796.

Molly rushed to her cubby bedroom, twisted up her hair, and flung on a fresh dress. Her hands snatched frantically at hooks that caught in hair and laces, at eyes that burrowed, demoniac. Her lashes glittered with tears of angry shame. Were she and Jim young folk, just starting out, this haphazard entertaining would be all very well. But at forty to pretend a bland Bohemianism, to welcome your guests in a yellow pine shack, to offer them the meal that your own hot blundering hands have prepared—ah, that's another story!

The white launch swung alongside. At the bow stood Jim, taller and more gaunt than ever beside the huge, stocky, gray-haired man at his elbow. From the cabin emerged a plump, rosy, gray-haired lady, in impeccable tweeds and storm-coat. As with laughing aplomb. She met Jim's blank eyes with glowing reassurance. But Jim did not seem to see her. He did not seem to see anything. His face was a mask of utter weariness.

The dinner, at last on the table, proved hot and eatable, at least in spots. The storm had risen to a gale now. Rain and sleet dashed on the low windows. The flimsy shack rocked under the heaving shoulder of the wind. Molly drew a deep breath. Small and bare as the shack might be, her guests were surely more comfortable than in their damp, close cabin. She smiled at Jim again. He did not see her. He sat hunched at the foot of the table, barely tasting his food. His face was gray and lifeless. His fine, boyishly clear features looked blurred and dull, ground down by the attrition of defeat. Molly put

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down her fork. The food choked her. But pluckily, gayly, she chatted on.

"It's too pitch-dark and stormy to wallow round these ditches," said the chief, pushing back his chair. As he stood up, his tall, ponderous figure dwarfed the little room. His broad face dropped into grave, calculating lines. "And I've got to be in St. Louis to-morrow, so Mrs. Kirkland and I must catch the midnight train out of Cobb's Landing. So, Stirling, you must give me an idea how things stand. If you ladies will excuse us, we'll get to work right now."

Jim was already opening his desk. The two men bent at once to their task. Molly silently cleared the table. Then she sat down beside Mrs. Kirkland, who had settled herself by a lamp, and drawn a handful of crochet from her gold bag. They did not try to talk. Even their quiet voices might disturb the men. Mrs. Kirkland seemed to accept the situation with the unconcern of a familiar experience. Her plump white hands, flashing with superb diamonds and emeralds, shaped small, lumpy Irish-crochet rosebuds with rapid skill. Her round, peony-pink face, under smartly coiffed gray hair, shone with an inimitable contentment. It was all written there, her whole placid story; her well-fed healthy body; her solid assured sense of superior possessions, an established place in life; her profound satisfaction with her own mate, her own self, even her own deep inward being.

Molly studied her absently. In her sore heart a slow rage kindled. Motherwise, Mrs. Kirkland had already talked of her children; her three "girls," all married, and married, Molly perceived, exceedingly well; her sons, who had gone through Harvard and Tech, with leisurely vacations abroad, and were now well started, each on his broad, prosperous highroad. Molly's lips set. Before her aching eyes swam Priscilla's small, impish, lovely face; then Jim Junior's sober little countenance; then baby 'Lizabeth's face, so near! She could feel 'Lizabeth's pussy-willow cheek against her own, the soft brush of her downy gold hair, the tight clasp of her strong baby arms. An angry sob rose in her throat. Oh, this other woman, and her great successful brute of a man! Why must they command every comfort and delight to lavish on their children, while Jim and she, for all their slaving toil, could not dare to spend a dollar, beyond their absolute needs!

She looked across at Jim's haggard, absorbed face. Unconsciously she stretched out her hand to him. Never had she felt more passionately one with her husband. Yet never in her life had she felt so cruelly alone. For all Jim knew of the misery that was consuming her, he might have stood across the gulfs of the universe.

"Um! Guess I've got the hang of this thing now." The chief spoke very low; yet his deep, booming voice filled the little room with grim reverberations. "Your October estimates didn't pan out because of the coal strike. So the dredges earned only twelve hundred dollars that month. Didn't half cover running expenses. And November fell short because that fool dredge-runner smashed your hoisting gear for you. That set you back two solid weeks. By George, that was hard luck! Why didn't you hustle down to St. Louis and lease another dredge, while your gear was being rebuilt?"

Molly flinched. Over Jim's face burnt a slow scorching red.

"Hadn't the funds just then, sir. You know you can't lease a two-yard dredge under four hundred a week."

"Oh! I see." The chief slowly nodded his grizzled head. "That's the mischief of subletting when a man hasn't adequate capital." His words were merciless, yet his slow thinking voice was so completely impersonal that they carried no sting. "Then in December the railroad company got out their injunction, and held you up for five days."

"Yes."

"And in January and February, the great thaw ruined a lot of your levee-work. Then came high water; it has blocked the whole job ever since. And you've used up your margins of time and funds and supplies. In the end, you'll be lucky if you don't come out six or eight thousand behind. By George, it's tough!" The chief lunged to his feet. He stared down at the ruck of papers; he stared at Jim's gray, moveless face. Molly quivered. The chief's words had fallen on her like so many clean blows. She wanted to run to her husband and put her arms around

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him, and hide that dear sunken head against her breast. Yet, curiously, she felt no anger toward the chief. Hot partisan though she was, she knew that he was never blaming Jim. He was merely summing it all up: strikes, breakdowns, the whole implacable account. And now, like a wise old surgeon, having spoken his diagnosis, he looked at Jim from under hooded brows, and waited.

"You've put it in a nutshell." Jim spoke at last in a queer flat voice. "I've met up with more mishaps than a man of my limited means can cope with. However, sir, I can assure you that your company shall not be embarrassed by my difficulties."

"Humph, I'm not giving that a thought. But it's a sick outlook for you. Six months more work on this God-forsaken ditch, with only the chance of breaking even to look forward to!"

"I can face that, all right." The harsh red deepened in Jim's face. "But I—I'd particularly hoped that I'd make good on this job. To be employed by your company has been a great satisfaction. I'd even hoped——"

He stopped short. His eyes fell. Molly could finish that sentence. The Lake Linden fill, his longed-for chance! If only——

"Um! Guess I understand, Stirling." Kirkland stared at the black oblong of the uncurtained window. His great bull head stooped; his gray eyes lit with a curious absent glow. It was as if he stared away, past the low room, past the dingy fleet outside, the storm-tossed woods, the dark, brimming river, away across the miles, across the years. "Yes. I understand, all right. Lord, when I remember! Twenty-six years ago it is, this very month——"

"Yes, sir, the big dredge, down to the river."

He halted. His eyes turned from that black pane to his wife's calm, rosy face, her fair, plump hands, still at their interminable crochet.

"Twenty-six years ago, this month. Remember, Louisa?" The chief's eyes deepened with that queer reflective gleam. "And just such weather as this. Rain and fog and mud, strikes and freshets and smash-ups—by George, Stirling, what's all that racket? Hark!"

There was a rush of feet on the steps, then a crashing knock, a high, excited shout.

"Mister Stirling, sir! Open the door. Quick!"

Molly and Jim sprang to the door. On the threshold stood Finnegan, the night watchman. He waved his smoking lantern in their faces.

"My God, sir! Come, quick! Hurry! The dredge has sprung a leak!"

"The dredge! Not the big dredge, Finnegan!"

"Yes, sir, the big dredge, down to the river. An' she's sinkin' fast."

"Call the crews. Hurry!" Jim thrust the megaphone into his hands, then turned to snatch up boots and slicker.

"Call the crews, is it? When you laid the men off because of the storm, they lit out for the village, every mother's son of

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'em. There's not a soul left on the boats but McCarthy and me. We've been tryin' to make fast her moorings, but in this storm we can't handle the hawsers. An' the current jerkin' her like wild horses, an'——"

But Jim and the chief had already seized lanterns and were pelting off down the bank. Molly stood motionless, gaping after them.

"Wake up, child!" A plump hand gripped her shoulder and shook her vigorously. "Come along!"

Mrs. Kirkland was thrusting her crochet into the bag. Her calm eyes flashed; her placid, imperious voice rang high. "Don't look so dazed, girl! Get into boots and knickers, if you have 'em, and be spry. Give me some pins, please!" Deftly she kilted her tweed skirts to her knees, and pulled on her own high boots. She wound a scarf over Molly's head, hustled her into a cloak, snatched the overshoes from her limp hands, knelt and tugged them on. "Tut, tut! Don't look so white. Yes, I guess *I* know what it means to lose a dredge! Right in the midst of a contract, too. But we're not going to lose this dredge, d'you hear me? Come, now!"

She seized Molly's arm and dragged her down the steps. Slipping, splashing, they floundered on in the wake of the men with their lanterns. Narrow tilting planks bridged the canal from shore to tow-boat. From tow-boat to river-bank hung a swaying rope-and-board footway, then more dizzy planks to the dredge. Mrs. Kirkland fled across them with the speed of light. Molly staggered behind. The men were already aboard the dredge. Jim had taken command. Jim was always good in emergencies.

"She's sprung an ugly leak astern. Maybe more than one. She's sunk a foot, so far. We have only four men, all told. Molly! Go telephone Cobb's Landing, and get Jacobs and Smith and all the men you can reach, and tell 'em to hike down. Double-quick!"

"Sure, sir, in this storm and dark, it'll take 'em two hours to get here."

"That's a fact. By that time——"

Jim stopped. Beneath their feet sounded a faint, ominous sucking.

"By that time this boat will sink to engine-room level." The chief's voice boomed out inexorably. "We four must get busy and patch up a bulkhead. But meanwhile she's shipping water every second. And no steam up for the pumps. Two of us must man the hand-pumps, to keep her from sinking any deeper. The other two——"

"Nonsense. All four of you go to work on your bulkheading. Mrs. Stirling and I will take the pumps. Get to work, now. Right away!"

Mrs. Kirkland pushed forward into the ring of light. She threw the wet coat from her shoulders. Her large, white hands flashed as she lifted them to her head. Her full pink face flushed crimson.

"You, Louisa!" sputtered the chief. Then he glared at her. "You two women can never handle one pump, let alone two. Go back to the cabin, both of you. This is no place for you."

"That'll do, John Kirkland." Mrs. Kirkland's blue eyes snapped. She rolled up her long silk sleeves. "We two can handle the pumps an hour, anyhow. Hoots, Mr. Stirling, what's a drop of rain? We're neither sugar nor salt. That's a-plenty arguing, John. Haven't I done enough worse work than this in my day? Mind the *Miami?* H'm, I thought so. Now, watchman, haul out the pumps. I'll help you shove them into the hatch. And you men get to work on that bulkhead. Hear me?"

It seemed to Molly that they two had stood a black eternity at the tall iron pumps, their hands gripped over the rusty handles, their bodies wrenched and jolted by the powerful recoil. Bilge-water splashed at their feet. Rain and wind beat in their faces. Jim had turned on the big search-light. In its white glare the dark, hurrying river, the huddled boats, the swaying, leafless trees, stood out stark and clear, weird as an abandoned world. From below came the noise of hammers, the chief's booming voice, Jim's sharp, infrequent orders. And from below came always the churning splash of the pistons, the faint, rhythmic shudder of the hull, that slow tremor that told of the powerful currents dragging always at the weakened keel.

Mrs. Kirkland's fighting blood was up. Her big arms pulled and jerked like clock-

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work; her round face burned scarlet. Beads of sweat mingled with the raindrops on her forehead. She worked like a splendid old Amazon. Molly never looked her way. Her face was drained and bloodless. She hauled and tugged at her pump like a mad thing. Her body clung against the handle, rose with it, pitched back, as if one with its mechanism. Whirling through her brain in crazy pulses of terror flamed the one hideous thought: If the men couldn't stop that leak—if the pumps failed to clear the hold—if the dredge must sink, after all— Well, it would mean not just loss, not just failure. It would wreck this contract. It would open a pit of ruin beneath their feet.

"But we must save the dredge! We must. We *must!*" The words came soundlessly from her ashen lips. Her head swimming, her breath coming in great anguished gasps, she drove at the pump with all her strength. One moment the children's faces glimmered before her eyes. For the babies' sake—and yet, how little the babies counted! No, for Jim's sake, alone, they must not fail.

"You two women can never handle one pump, let alone two."—Page 798.

The pumps moved more heavily now. The water swashed in a lessening stream.

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Molly looked at it in a sudden puzzled relief. Less water in the hold. That meant the leak was already under control. Then out rang a yell of satisfaction, and up through a hatch shot Finnegan, sooty as a gnome, his face shining through the grime.

"Saints be praised, 'twas but one bad leak, afther all, ma'am! And we finished bulkheadin' this minute. Do you give me that pump, now. I'll clear out what little bilge there is left."

"Yes, and give me a hand there, Louisa." The chief emerged from the hatch, sweaty and beaming. "Congratulations, Mrs. Stirling. You folks won't lose your dredge after all. Though two hours ago it looked a mighty slim chance. But your husband was equal to the crisis. He has put in as tidy a first-aid bulkhead as I ever laid eyes on." He turned to clap Jim heartily on the shoulder. "Good work, man. Now, Louisa! Give me that pump."

"In a minute——"

"Right away. By George, but you're a sight, my dear! Look at your hair!"

"My hair? Good gracious!" All the Amazon went out of Mrs. Kirkland. As a bride suddenly aware of her man's presence, she twisted up her wet straggled locks, and hurriedly retied her veil. With Finnegan's lantern dancing ahead, the four tramped back, across the plank bridges, up the bank to the shack. The chief and his wife laughed and joked, in fine fettle. To them, Molly thought drearily, these two bitter hours had been rather a frolic. But she and Jim could not exult with them. That dusk wing of calamity had brushed too close. They had not conquered. They had merely escaped. And who could tell how soon those patched timbers might yield again to the thrusting current? How dared they dream of safety, even for an hour?

Back at the cabin, Jim mended the fire, while Molly rummaged out dry clothes for Mrs. Kirkland, and heated some bouillon. It was nearing midnight. The Kirklands must be off in half an hour, to make their train.

The chief stood steaming by the fire, bouillon cup in hand. Suddenly he turned his head, and stared again at the dark little window. Again Molly's glance was caught by the strange, grave brooding look in his eyes. He seemed to look away, past them all, past the very night itself. Then he turned. Again his eyes bent deeply on the face of his wife.

"Just such a night as this, just such a smash-up." His deep voice boomed out the words. "Takes us back a good many years, Louisa?"

Mrs. Kirkland looked up swiftly. Over her calm face glinted a flash of memory: the gleam of a remembered terror.

"I rather guess it does take us back." Her full throat quivered with a shaken breath. "Just such times as this we had, twenty-six years ago, that whole hateful contract at Alton. My, how did we live and stand it?"

"Mind the night our own dredge sank? When we were within five hundred feet of finishing our main cut? By George!" He glanced at Jim, shrunken in his chair. "Turns me sick and chilly to remember it. You see, our company—that was Louisa and me—owned only one dredge in those days. Just half paid for, at that. Only thing on earth we did own, mind you. Mind how we all pitched into that bulkheading? But no use. She sank so fast, we might as well a' tried to patch her with egg-shells."

"I wasn't on the contract just then, dear. You forget. That was when Ned was just a tiny baby, and I was staying at mother's. But I was with you a month later, when the towboat caught fire. Remember?"

"I reckon I do remember. And you nearly broke your back, carrying sand to smother it." The chief nodded grimly. "We'd never saved that tow-boat if it hadn't been for you. You were awake, tending little Ned, and you saw the light, and gave the alarm. As it was, that fire set us back so badly that we were penalized eight days. At a hundred dollars a day. By *George!*" The chief threw back his big shoulders as if he would throw off an intolerable weight. His hooded eyes flamed. "We were stone broke. The contract had cleaned us out as neat as a whistle. So I had to take that eight hundred out of my life insurance. Lord! No eight hundred in this world can never look as big to me again. Drawing that check hurt worse than drawing teeth.

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And the year after, when I hadn't any contract at all, and prowled around idle all year, and you and little Ned had to go home to your mother's—that was tougher yet."

He fell silent. His face darkened, as if the shadow of that dark year drifted past, a hovering menace still.

"You did all any man could, John Kirkland." His wife set down her cup. Her calm eyes flashed. "You kept books, and did odd jobs of draughting, and even went as foreman of a bridge gang, anything to keep us going. It wasn't John's fault, anyway, that we got such a late start." She wheeled belligerently on her hosts. Her voice rang in high defence. "John was a splendid engineer. Everybody knows that. But we'd married young, and we had a houseful of babies before he'd saved up enough to buy his first dredging fleet. After that, every contract he was awarded brought disaster. Nine years of high water and cave-ins and wreck and fire! No man alive can beat that. We were both past forty before we got out of debt, even. And the children all growing so fast, and needing things, and all! Yes, we made a late start. And we had a long, hard pull. But John won out. I always knew he would."

"Takes us back a good many years, Louisa?" —Page 800.

Her eyes met the chief's. Molly saw that long, deep understanding look. A warm little thrill stirred in Molly's heart. Unconsciously she drew nearer.

"We won out together, you mean. It was mostly your doing, Louisa. And it was a long pull, all right. You better believe, we know what a job like this one means!" Again he looked at the dusky window. It was as if his slow gaze looked past the darkness, down the long canal with its treacherous banks, its maddening seeps and slides; down the river shore at the crowded barges; on to the great wounded dredge, plunging on her moorings in the rough water, her patched hull so terribly frail a sheath for the precious machinery. "Yes. We've gone the whole infernal road." He halted: then his voice took on a new significant ring. "That's one reason I decided that our company won't sublet anymore contracts. If a job succeeds, we fellows who back it ought to get a bigger slice. If it fails, that smashing big loss avalanches down on one man. So, after this year, we run the work ourselves. On salaries, not percentages."

Molly frowned. For a minute, she did not understand. But not a glimmer of expression crossed Jim's face. For Jim, every word had driven home. No more subletting! Then, no more chances with the Inter-State people! Well, it was very decent of the chief to let him down in this quiet, offhand way. Of course all his casual sentences meant but one thing: that his work for the Inter-State had been a failure; an abject failure. He could ask no more consideration. He had been given his big chance, and he had fumbled it, that was all.

Yes, the chief had been mighty square. But—with no more contracts from the Inter-State, with no chance of retrieval——

Jim's head sank on his breast. The cabin darkened slowly round him. An

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icy chill crept through his veins. No use —no chance——

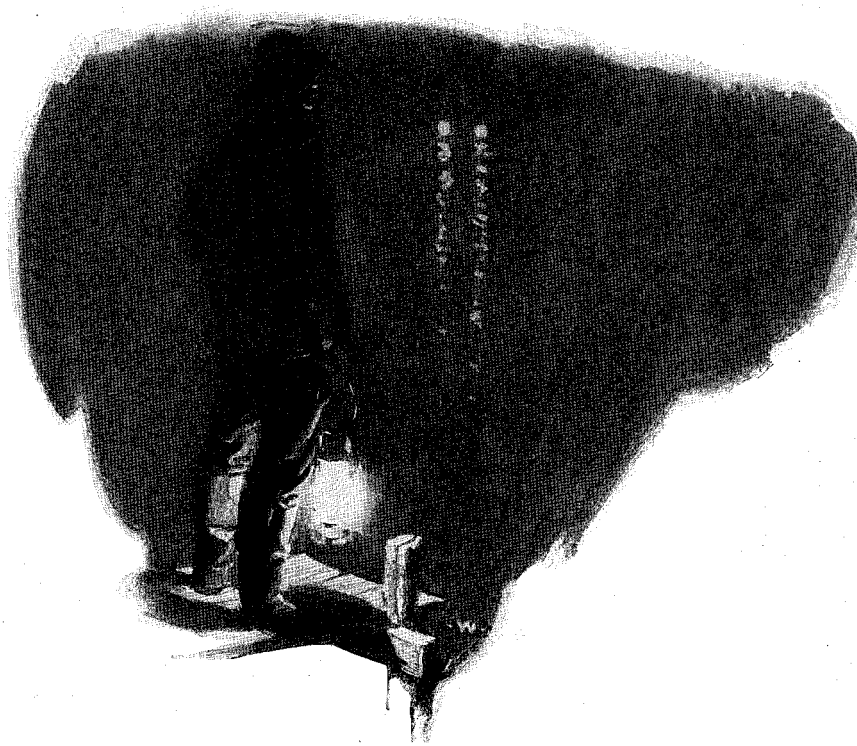
And then it came to him, slowly, that the chief was speaking again. And his words flared through that stifling murk, incredible, ablaze:

"Of course we'll want to employ top-notch engineers. Especially on the Lake Linden fill. It's going to be a stiff one, all right. Only a top-notch man can swing it. So, Mr. Stirling, if you have no other plans for next year, I hope you will take us into account."

There was a pause. Neither Jim nor Molly stirred. Molly's dazed eyes lit with wonder. But a deep flush rose in Jim's haggard face, as if the very fire of life was pouring back into his numbed veins.

"We're offering six thousand salary, and all expenses, of course. With a bonus for every day you finish ahead of time. Personally, I'd like to see Mrs. Stirling, here, on your staff." He bowed to Molly; his hooded eyes lit with a friendly sparkle. "She'd be a valuable first-mate. Just as Mrs. Kirkland was for me. Though you'd swing the job easy enough, all right."

"I'm not so dead sure of that," Jim mumbled, at last. His mouth was so parched, he could hardly speak. The narrow dull room blazed before his eyes, rang as with the blast of trumpets. The Lake Linden fill! Salary, six thousand—



Lantern in hand, Jim waited till the red and green lights vanished past the river bend.—Page 803.

dizzily he began to count. Six thousand dollars! He could wipe out his worst debts. He could pay for Priscilla's music lessons, and Jim Junior's tool-house, and a new dining-room rug. He could get his head above water. "Only a top-notcher can swing it—" an hysterical chuckle shook him. He a top-notcher! He, with all his failures spread out on the miry ditch before him!

"Yes. You'll swing it, if anybody can." The chief's deep voice pondered on. "Though, if we should meet up with such a mess of ruination as you've just weathered on this contract, I'd be glad to know that things were in your hands. You don't lose your nerve. No matter

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how bad the smash-up, you'd always hang on and save the pieces."

"Yes. I'd try to save the pieces." But there was no misgiving in Jim's voice. Through him, thrill on thrill, urged the splendid certainty of success.

"Mercy, John, look at the clock! We must start this minute, to make that train." With true womanly hen-terror of being left behind, Mrs. Kirkland ran to the door. "Oh, there are the launch-lights, now!"

Molly helped her into her wraps. Molly's cheeks were scarlet now, her eyes glowed, brown stars. Triumph was calling high in Molly's heart, too.

With much cajolery Jim and the chief helped Mrs. Kirkland inch by inch down the gangway and aboard the launch. Two hours ago she had skimmed across wet six-inch planks like Atalanta. But now she teetered and twittered and narrowly escaped spilling all three into the canal. Lastly, Jim ran back for her forgotten Irish crochet. Molly crammed it into his hand without looking up. Nor did Jim dare look Molly's way. Had their eyes met, undoubtedly both would have exploded on the spot.

Lantern in hand, Jim waited till the red and green lights vanished past the river bend. Then he went back to the shack.

"Well, old lady?"

"Well, Jim?"

Molly was busily covering the fire. Sheer delight had overflowed Molly's plucky heart. That high tide brimmed and blinded in her happy eyes. She knelt, industriously punching, as if she would punch back the betraying choke in her voice. "W-well, Jim?"

No reply, save a gasp and a thud.

She turned, startled.

Once more, the eternal small boy had bobbed up in Jim. No wonder there was no sound out of him! Eyes popping, forehead bursting crimson, he was turning solemn ecstatic handsprings across the floor.

"*Jimmy!*" Molly sobbed out, then, a wild, preposterous cackle of alarm and temper and delight. "Of all the kid tricks! And both of us on the ragged edge of forty, this minute! For shame!"

Deliberately Jim reversed himself to a more conventional attitude. There was no cloud of shame upon his radiant face. In these twenty minutes he had thrown off twenty years. To Molly's shining eyes he was her boy again, daring, insolent, adorable.

"Ragged edge of forty, or ragged edge of nothin', who cares?" He bent to Molly swiftly. And the splendid hope in his glowing face made her heart leap. "You old peach! What do I care, if I'm standing on the ragged edge of blazes—so long as you're standing by?"

VOX CLAMANTIS

By C. A. Price

How shall we find, although we seek—one sayeth—
  The guidance of our fathers' simpler day?
  Not less our need; but on our path no ray
Falls of the shining sun that they called Faith.
Our feet are set in darkness, and our breath
  Beats against emptiness when we would pray;—
  Alone we grope and stumble on our way
To the great hour of freedom that is Death.

Not ours the fault if we are left in night.
  In humble hearts Faith's lamp is still atrim.
Tradition's oil no more feeds Reason's light.
  Mayhap our eyes, and not the flame, are dim.
What can earth show that does not mock our sight?
  The Saints remain who have believed in Him.

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AFTER THE GREAT WAR

1815–1915

BY WILLIAM MORTON FULLERTON

Author of "Problems of Power."

"I speak with the freedom of History and I hope without offence."—BURKE.

I

ALMOST one hundred years ago to-day the French army commanded by Napoleon was being undone at Waterloo. And it is just a century since, at the Congress of Vienna, the representatives of almost all the European states, great and small, signed a score of treaties for the reconstruction and readjustment of the national barriers that had been overthrown by Bonaparte. It was obvious at the time, and it is even more obvious to-day, that the dominant aim of the majority of the plenipotentiaries at this congress was to repress, in the interests of the monarchs by Divine Right, the expansive tendencies of France.

Three and a half generations have passed, and Europe is face to face with a situation of an importance even more stupendous than that confronting it in 1814–15. The little Prussian state, shattered at Jena, resuscitated at Vienna, made an empire at Versailles on the ruins of a dismembered France, set forth, in the autumn of 1914, on a gigantic raid of pillage, over the neutral lowlands of Flanders and across the glens of Luxemburg, to complete in the Gallo-Roman fields and vineyards the cycle of its fortune.

After having achieved its dream of becoming the taskmaster of the Germans, and after having humiliated the haughty Hapsburg at Sadowa, the Hohenzollern turned his chief attention to France. Humiliation of France, going at times up to what Henri Houssaye called its "crucifixion," has been for a century the constant aim of Prussia. By the Treaty of Frankfort Prussian policy became German policy. That policy, save for a brief tentative period, when Germany fancied to enslave France by boorish caress and corruption, has been brutal and brow-beating. From the entrance of the allies into Paris in 1814 down to the mad and futile demonstrations of Teutonic aggressiveness with reference to Moroccan affairs in 1905 and 1906, with a view to breaking up the Anglo-French entente, Germany has never for a moment abandoned her policy of crushing France: 1870 did not satisfy her. The "French scare" of 1875, exploded by de Blowitz and Decazes, was but the forerunner of the scare of 1905 ending in Monsieur Delcassé's fall, of the crisis of 1911, and of the assault of 1914. During more than forty years, indeed, Prussia has been preparing to add to her dominions the western Vosges and the Jura, Champagne, and the two Burgundies, Rotterdam and Antwerp, Dunkirk and Boulogne, Trieste and the middle east. To pretexts for action she has been indifferent; for fine occasions she has lain maliciously in wait. Two terrible wars in the Balkans, lifting athwart one of the great routes of German expansion an impassable barrier of strong Slav powers, offered her, at last, the occasion she desired. Methodically she prepared for war. Suddenly, notwithstanding the efforts of her neighbors to arrest the irreparable—efforts that more than once all but skirted the abyss of national dishonor—Prussianized Germany (with no pretext decent for the ears of God or man, but impelled solely by that aggressive gluttony, that land-hunger and that thirst for wassail that have always characterized this race from Attila to the incendiaries of Louvain and Rheims) launched more than two million men amid an innocent and neutral folk into the historic roads that lead to Paris. While the German armed aeroplanes were hovering over the head of Napoleon in the Place

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Vendome, the French and the English, luring these hordes on to the coign of vantage that they themselves had chosen, waited for their shock. In the battles of the Marne the Hohenzollerns met their doom. The sealing of that doom will be the epoch-making task of 1915. Whether it be at Brussels, or in another European capital, the congress which will be convened in 1915 to establish a new map of Europe and the world, will be an adjourned sitting of the Congress of Vienna. Happily the century that has intervened since Talleyrand, Metternich, and Wellington wrangled amid the Vienna carnival of the springtime of 1815 has been a century full of admirable object-lessons. They who have fancied that, because we are living in an era of great material civilization—under the domination of a "law of acceleration" which has tended altogether to differentiate the modern man from his fellows of the preceding centuries—the lessons of history are no longer applicable, will learn in 1915 the magnitude of their blunder.

II

THE historians have passed round the countersign: the Treaty of Vienna is a dead letter. They have repeatedly noted the caducity of the majority of the separate stipulations signed in 1815. They have remarked that, after all, only a certain number of the dispositions of the treaties of Vienna are still in vigor. Because the texts relative to the partition of Poland and to the formation of the North German Confederation "have at present only a theoretic and retrospective interest"* and because there still remain intact of this great instrument, after the upheavals of the nineteenth century, only a few notable declarations—that with regard to the neutrality of Switzerland, that with reference to the free navigation of rivers separating or traversing different states, or that determining the relative rank of diplomatic agents—it has been too hastily accepted that the curious works of diplomatic art accomplished at Vienna have only an "historic" or even merely an æsthetic import. Instead, however, of being a dead letter, it has been a living word for a tormented century. Although the hegemony of Prussia was not publicly consecrated until, by the Treaty of Prague, Austrian power collapsed, it still remains that the German Confederation, established by the Congress of Vienna, was the broad foundation on which the Prussian monarchy began to plan the outworks of the future imperial structure. What the Prussian plenipotentiaries, Hardenberg and Humboldt, in their note to Metternich of February 10, 1815, on their proposed scheme for a German confederation, called "the beautiful variety of the German tribes,"* was soon to be converted into a pudding-stone of peoples, compactly united in the solid Prussian matrix. Later on a Bismarck who had spent his days and nights in the study of the labors of the Congress of Vienna had only to ally himself with a Moltke in order to sweep away such flimsy obstacles as Napoleon III—who had broken the great tradition of French diplomacy—to complete provisionally that unity of Germany under Prussian hegemony which it had been all along the high resolve of the Brandenburgers to secure.

Napoleon III would better have studied the *Obiter Dicta* of his great homonym.

Hypnotized by the idea of laying the ghosts of the *Grande Armée*, of annulling the fiats of Napoleon, and of humiliating France, the coalition of powers of the old régime, the plenipotentiaries of Divine Right, failed to take one essential precaution. Yet Napoleon—of whom Mary Caroline of Naples had magnificently said, "If he were to die, his body should be pulverized, and a dose of it should be given to each sovereign, two doses of it to each of their ministers, and then matters would go better"†—had more sagacity than all the Metternichs, the Talleyrands, and the Castlereaghs; and whatever the exasperation of these diplomats, and of the people and sovereigns they represented, against the ogre, the plenipotentiaries of the Congress of Vienna, if they had been perspicacious statesmen, would have taken to heart the utterance of Napoleon at Tilsit: "It is

* See "Les Grands Traités Politiques," by P. Albin. (Alcan, 1912, 2d edition, p. 4.)

* See "Le Congrès de Vienne et les Traités de 1815," by Comte d'Angeberg. (Amyot, 1864, vol. I, p. 744.)

† Correspondance inédite de Marie Caroline, Reine de Naples et de Sicile avec le Marquis de Gallo. Publiée et annotée par le Commandant M. H. Weil et le Marquis C. di Somma Circello. (Paris: Emile Paule, 1911, tome I, p. 490.)

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part of my system to weaken Prussia. I mean that she shall no longer be a power in the political balance of Europe."* By failing to heed this warning they laid the foundations of the grandeur of Prussia. Bismarck and Moltke, it should constantly be repeated, were in being in the Vienna treaties that extended the frontier of the little Mark of Brandenburg across the provinces of the Rhine, leaving just outside the elastic ring a set of small, easily confederated German states that were destined to be the prey of intrigue and to become, owing to alien racial pressure, inevitably coagulated under Prussian hegemony. "We receive on the Rhine some picturesque and splendid provinces," writes the Princess Radziwill on February 18, 1815, to her husband, Prince Antoine, "provinces which are, no doubt, a fine acquisition; and if the kingdom which we are getting on the Rhine touches the old one, I don't think that we would really chuck for it any other empire (*je crois que nous ne pourrions plus désirer de troquer avec tout autre empire*)."†

III

EVEN before the close of the Congress of Vienna an observer in Paris fully abreast of the time could have had no doubt as to the forces that were at work for the construction of some such European future as has been marked by the dates 1866, 1870, 1914. And, in view of this fact, it is to be hoped that the allies who are to dictate peace to the Hohenzollerns after the present war, or the plenipotentiaries of the coming congress, will arm themselves for their great duties with a cautious irony. A hundred years ago an ancestor of the present Czar, the Emperor Alexander, was fêted in Paris to the cry of "*Vive Alexandre, notre libérateur.*" Napoleon had just signed his abdication and retired from the great stage of the world to his islet of Elba. The allies who had compassed his downfall, assembled under the roof of Prince de Talleyrand, meditated the Treaty of Paris. To France was accorded, not only her former frontier of 1792, but portions even of the departments that are now Belgian or German, the towns of Beaumont and Chimay, Sarrebruck and Landau, rich regions of the Lower Rhine, another million of subjects. Navigation on the Rhine was declared free. And amid the fervor of generous emulation that surrounded the plenipotentiaries, finally released from the nightmare of the twenty years' war, the Emperor Alexander—anticipating the act of his mystical descendant, Nicholas II, at the outset of the war of 1914—announced his intention of restoring the former kingdom of Poland, the fusion of all the Polish provinces detached by the partition of 1772. Officers and courtesans, bankers and diplomats, supping in the Palais Royal, drank the health of the handsome Czar, "the peacemaker, *l'Ange de la Paix.*"

Meanwhile, the Prussian armies were still in Saxony. The Saxon King was a captive at Breslau, trembling at the possible loss of his hereditary states, which Prussia already regarded as her own. The Congress of Vienna, convened to elaborate the details of the stipulations fixed by the Treaty of Paris, was about to open, and Louis XVIII, faithful to the principle that had inspired for centuries the diplomacy of France prior to Napoleon, insisted in his instructions to his ambassador to that congress, Prince de Talleyrand, on the necessity that not only the great but the small powers should be represented at the congress. Considerations of justice, as he put it, required that none should be excluded, but, above all, the interests of France demanded it. "The interest of the small states is likewise its interest," said the perspicacious monarch. "All will wish to preserve their existence, France must want them to preserve it. Some may wish for an extension of their frontier, and it behooves France to let such extension take place, in so far as that may diminish the aggrandizements of the big states." And, with his eye intently fixed on Prussia, Louis XVIII specifies at length in these memorable instructions the list of small German states whose nationality must be maintained against the "innate ambition" of that power.

It is good in 1914, just after the decisive

* See "Problems of Power," by the author, p. vii.

† This hitherto unpublished document, which I owe to the extreme courtesy of my friend, Commandant Weil, emanates from the archives of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior, where it is classed with the "Reports of the Secret Political Police during the Congress of Vienna." It will be published soon after the war with some 3,000 documents of the same epoch in a book to be entitled "Autour du Congrès de Vienne."

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battles of the Marne and the Aisne, to recall the following passage, written just one hundred years ago for the guidance of the plenipotentiaries of France about to participate in the reconstruction of the map of Europe:

"For the Prussian Monarchy any pretext is good. It is altogether devoid of scruples. Mere convenience is its conception of right. Thus, within sixty-three years, its population, originally less than four millions, has become ten millions, and it has succeeded in creating a vast dominion by the acquisition of divers separate territories, which it is tending to unify by incorporating with them the territories that divide them. The terrible discomfiture that has befallen its ambition has taught it nothing. Even at this moment its agents and partisans are agitating Germany, depicting France as being again ready to invade it, pretending that Prussia alone is capable of defending it, and asking it to hand itself over to her for its very preservation. She would have liked to have Belgium. She wants everything between the present frontiers of France, the Meuse and the Rhine. She wants Luxemburg. All is up if Mayence is not given her. Security is impossible for her if she does not possess Saxony. The allies, it is said, have agreed to restore to her the power she possessed before her fall, to give her ten millions of subjects. If this claim were admitted, she would soon have twenty, and the whole of Germany would call her master. It is necessary, therefore, to set a limit to her ambition, first, by restraining, as far as possible, her expansion in Germany, secondly, by restraining her influence by means of a federal constitution. Her expansion will be restrained by preservation of all the small states, and by the aggrandizement of those that are her nearer rivals."*

This prophetic document illuminates a whole century of European history. Above all, it lights up the second half of that century from the wars of the duchies and Sadowa to the violation of Belgian neutrality by Prussia in August, 1914. It may be confidently affirmed that its radiance will not be spent when the successors of the Talleyrands, the Castlereaghs, and the Metternichs meet in the Congress of 1915. Under the menace of the browbeating methods of international business inaugurated by William II—the method of *Real-politik* and *haute-finance*, the world has been too long divorced from the serener tradition of the old diplomacy.

The voice of the great Napoleon, as its echo reaches us from Tilsit, should dominate the counsels of the future Congress of Brussels. The well-meaning dreamer of the second empire, in his passion for nationalities, sought mainly to aggrandize every nationality but his own. Catspaw of Bismarck, he half-consciously, half-unwittingly, aided Prussia to achieve German unity. He beheld vanishing amid the smoke of the battle-field of Sedan the pathetic cohort of his generous dreams. If France, England, and Russia have not learned the lesson of this past, let them suffer the consequences! The war of 1914 means many things; it means, above all, the defence of the great idea of national freedom, the respect of nationalities; but no French generosity and idealism, no British notion of justice, no Slav mysticism should be suffered to suggest, in the coming congress of the nations, such respect for freedom and for nationalities as will bring into being another European system liable, at all events before a generation to come, to lose its balance. One may even say that the great danger of the coming hour will be, not the establishment of injustice, but the creation of too much "justice." The meaning of this paradox is clear. Were the Austrian Germans, for instance, to be united to the German Germans, to the destruction of Austria, under a mistaken conviction of the "justice" of protecting the German nationality, Brussels would repeat the blunder of Vienna and prepare another war. Were France, again, to confine her claims to the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine, thus magnificently repudiating from sheer idealism the taking of legitimate precautions against future aggression on the Rhine and in the Rhine provinces, she would belie her most characteristic traditions. Even at Vienna the Rhenish provinces demurred to becoming Prussian. The mystical pact signed in Paris on September 26, 1815, between the Czar Alex-

* See "Le Congrès de Vienne et les Traités de 1815," by Count d'Angeberg. (Amyot, 1864, vol. I, pp. 215–238.)

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ander, the Emperor of Austria, and the King of Prussia, and known as the "Holy Alliance," was, in reality, a declaration of war on the part of arbitrary power against national aspirations. On September 5, 1914, all but a century later, the nations took their revenge. France, Russia, and England, engaged in a great war in order to establish the freedom of peoples and to maintain the balance of power in Europe, signed, without canting emphasis or appeal to Divine Right, a declaration to hold together to the bitter end. This declaration was, in a new and very real sense, a holy alliance. The task before the Allies after the present war will be, in spite of its apparent complexity, a task of an astonishing simplicity. Its guiding lines are few and neatly defined.

IV

THE idea of freedom, of nationality, has dominated the whole war. There is not an army in Europe to-day that has not its eyes uplifted toward the *labarum*, the symbolic banner, bearing the words *Freedom, Nationality*. To all the hosts of all the allies the time-spirit has seemed to say: "*In hoc signo vinces.*" Moreover, miracle of miracles, even the Germans—"that beautiful variety of German tribes"—will shortly descry the same liberating symbol. The German chancellor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, sought in a famous speech in the Reichstag in 1912 to distract the attention of the great liberal Powers by creating a Russian scare. But at the very first occasion given her Russia pricked this bubble and raised the standard of national freedom for the Slavs, for the Poles, and for the Armenians. Why did Austria go to war? Because the rise of Servia had blocked her way to Salonica. Why did Russia champion the Servian cause? To prevent Hungarian vindictiveness and Pan-German ambition from stifling the self-conscious Serbs just on the point of entering into their own. Why has England intervened? To save the Belgian nationality, brutally violated by a Power that had sworn to safeguard Belgian neutrality; to assure, by the maintenance of an integral, and even aggrandized France, the equilibrium of Europe, a balance of power synonymous with the freedom of peoples; and, above all perhaps, because of its belated perception of the clear verity which her idealism and her self-engrossment had so long prevented her from seeing: namely, that when Germans spoke of "claiming their place in the sun" they really dreamed of looming so largely there as verily to eclipse that luminary and to fling the planet behind them into their shadow. Europe is full of Alsace-Lorraines. This is an anomaly which it will be the destiny of the early twentieth century to abolish. Wherever there be a national soul, it must be allowed to breathe at ease. Nationality is the self-conscious struggle of a people to maintain its integrity when it is exposed to the gravitative attraction of a powerful neighbor. The present war is a war of nationalities. It is a war of nationalities even for the Germans. Yet a world-renowned sophist, the juggler of "The Great Illusion"—when was a book ever so happily named?—duped himself, as well as many of his readers, by the argument that the state was not a person. This sciolistic visionary's gaze, ranging over the peoples of the planet, was attracted only by the more obvious signs of the time. What he and his fellow economists called the "stratification of interests," the many apparent indications that the claims of class interest were overriding boundaries and shattering frontiers, was a truth too evident really to be ignored. But, contemplated too singly, it was a truth bound to ruin the judgment of any intelligence. The interesting facts were of another order. At no epoch of history, indeed, had there been so many instances to show, not merely that the state is a person, but that it is the sublimest of all persons. It is the sovereign conscience synthesizing all the reactions of the human soul. And if, contrary to appearances, the fact and the idea of nationality are more splendidly evinced than ever to-day, it is just because of the extent and number of the causes apparently making to their destruction. It was hardly necessary to have waited for such proof of this as has been offered by the Great War of 1914, the key-note of which was struck in the proclamation which the French Government addressed to the country when it said: "*Gloire aux vivants*

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et aux morts! Les hommes tombent. La Nation continue."

Germany and Austria were almost alone among the nations that had not succeeded in creating a national soul. The latter case is self-evident; and although, in presence of the enthusiasm with which Berlin sang the "Wacht am Rhein" in the nights of early August, 1914, the casual listener may have gathered that a real union (*Einigung*) had sprung from the artificial soil of German unity (*Einheit*) created by the Prussian navvies, competent observers had known full well that the weeds of the particularism of the confederated states still grew rank in the parterres of the German Empire. This fact was, at all events, very patent to the rulers of Germany. Prince von Bülow himself confesses that it was the fortuitous amalgamation, in the fire of Koeniggraetz and Sedan, of the "German spirit" and the "Prussian Monarchy" that welded the German Empire, and created the conditions of a lasting German political unity. "Ten centuries of German history," he said—and his testimony is grave!—"had not availed to bring forth a single result in politics."* The intellectual life of Germany, he reminds us, is the work of western and southern Germany. There alone resides the "German spirit." The German state was born in Prussia, which prepared the political culture of the German people. And he concludes that "reciprocal penetration of the Prussian genius and the German genius should be for Germany the task of the immediate future."

V

The Prussians manœuvred at the outbreak of the war of 1914 to convince the singularly ill-informed, the utterly "unpolitical" German people, that Germanism, the "German spirit," had been attacked by Russia and Pan-Slavism. Pan-Germanism would never have indulged in such frantic excesses if what Prince von Bülow says of the German spirit and the Prussian Monarchy were not true. The conclusion is obvious. It is a corollary of the chancellor's testimony, as it is the profound suggestion of the present Great War, that decapitation and destruction of the German Empire will be instantly secured by paralysis of the Prussian Monarchy. For the freedom of the Germans, for the security of the French, the British, the Belgians, and the Dutch, above all for the peace of the world, imperial Germany must go. The Hohenzollerns must retire within their Brandenburg Mark. Prussia must henceforth content herself with her frontiers of 1806. An emancipated south Germany will be the first to thank the armies of the Allies for this deliverance. Vienna—or, at all events, the function that Vienna has so long represented in the balance of power on the Continent of Europe—must be augmented to the diminution of Berlin. The Czar must be held to his promise by satisfying the nationalistic dreams of the Poles, to establish in the centre of Europe, between his millions of Slavs and the hordes of Germany, a buffer state, artificially relieving the westward pressure of the formidable Russias.

The Congress of Brussels, in a word, must learn and apply all the lessons of the Congress of Vienna. It must temper and control the inveterate idealism of its participants by a fearlessly pragmatic criticism based on a complete knowledge of the past. There is a multiplicity of minor matters which it will be called upon to solve: the balance of power in the Mediterranean (the islands of the Ægean, the Dardanelles, the coast of Syria, the Adriatic); the exploitation of the Middle East from Syria round by way of Persia to Bagdad (matters, most of them, happily solved just before the war); the problem of Turkey, the definitive sanctions of the renaissance of the Balkan peoples (Rumania in Transylvania, Servia and the southern Slavs); and even the new frontiers of the spheres of influence in Africa and among the islands of the Pacific. But this host of warring interests need not in reality bewilder nor darken counsel. Europe's prime duty is clear. That duty is to establish Gallo-Roman discipline and order and English liberty and fair play in a world—beginning with the German world—longing to continue to cultivate the arts of peace. Throughout all the lands that the Prussian, by his menace, had converted as it were into a sinister

* See the final chapter of Prince von Bülow's book, "Imperial Germany."

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concentration camp, one vast entrenchment of tax-ridden nations in arms, mankind, finally relieved of the hated blood-tax that the foes of the human race had for more than one hundred years imposed upon it, must be suffered at last to sow in peace and to reap in joy. For the accomplishment of this dream, there is only one sure way. Listen again to the words of Napoleon at Tilsit: "*It is part of my system to weaken Prussia. I mean that she shall no longer be a power in the political balance of Europe.*"

PARIS, September 22, 1914.

SUNSET BALCONIES

By Thomas Walsh

FOR me no winter twilight falls
But brings a dream of gold,
Since well I know their dear white walls
Are gleaming as of old;
I know that down arcaded square
And narrow street they still are there
Dolores, Pilar, Mercedes,
Reclining in the balconies.

Mercedes, who belies the name
Of her sweet patroness renowned
As Queen of Mercies, shrined in flame,
At Barcelona crowned;
And Pilar, little face of rose,
Whose Virgin on the pillar glows
At Saragossa; there they rest,
Their dark eyes golden with the west.

Though seven swords of silver press,
In high Granada's shrine
Her velvet-mantled patroness
Of Mother-Grief divine,
Dolores only smiles to scan
The sunset on her spangled fan,
Whose sparkle lights again the grace
That memory treasures of her face.

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THE POINT OF VIEW

THE other day I re-read that exquisite little classic, Mrs. Meynell's "Fellow-Travellers with a Bird." Its immediate effect was to make me regret for the thousandth time that I have failed to keep a daily record of the verbal quaintnesses and comicalities of my own small adventurers on the uncharted seas of speech. They are so striking at the time—these sayings; one is sure that one will not forget them; they pass into the family vernacular, apparently "for good." But a new idiom is coined, and the latest one is superseded, and so these fresh and inimitable experiments go unrecorded, and eventually are lost.

Verbal Adventures

We grown-ups, I suppose, can realize but dimly, in occasional flashes of insight, what an unconquered, experimental thing language is to a child. A child of four uses his own small vocabulary, for daily purposes, with such ease and assurance that we forget that he is not, like ourselves, using the small change he carries in his pocket, so to speak, but is operating upon his entire capital. He is consciously pattering about on the wet sands at the water-line, aware all the while of the immense, mysterious ocean of adult speech lying out beyond him. He shows this by the promptitude and interest with which he seizes upon and examines every new word that seems to come at all within the range of his possibilities. An alert child hardly ever lets one get by. One day, being, I suppose, in a rather toplofty mood, I added to my customary "You mustn't do that, Jimby," the somewhat ornate "I cannot allow such conduct." Both Jimby and his small sister were instantly on the alert. "What's *conduct*, mother?" one of them inquired, while the other listened, spellbound. My explanation, however, made less impression upon them than the mere personality, so to speak, of that fascinating new word. A few moments later they were poring over a picture-book together. "There's one conduct," said the three-year-old, "and there's another—and there's another." She was pointing to totally dissimilar objects. No matter; the objects were only symbols, make-believes; the reality was the impact of that neat, effective new sound—the word itself.

She was really doing exactly what the latest literary Post-Impressionists are doing; letting words stand for what they seem to mean at the moment to the user, and not for the particular things usage has agreed they shall mean. A child, however, soon abandons this method, finding it impracticable—since language grew out of the very fact that agreement is necessary for practical purposes, and its usefulness, therefore, depends upon such an agreement. And so, doubtless, would the Post-Impressionist, if he were not at liberty to fall back, in the daily conduct of life, upon the unthinking arbitrariness of the vulgar. If he were compelled to deal with a soulful grocer who insisted upon giving him pickles when he asked for cheese, on the ground that cheese sounded green and slender to him instead of yellow and slab-like, they would probably find it necessary to sacrifice the impression of one to that of the other. Or, as a compromise, they might find some neutral-toned substantive which the ear of each could tolerate as the audible symbol of cheese. In which case they would be no longer pure Impressionists.

The same small adventurer who so liked the sound of "conduct" was greatly taken by the possibilities of the abstract noun. Of course she heard one, and unconsciously examined it before she made one. But the first we knew of it was when one evening, after a funeral in the neighborhood had greatly interested the children, she settled herself in my lap and suggested cosily: "Now let's talk about *deadness!*" Like Stevenson's little protagonist, she thinks that swinging is "the pleasantest thing ever a child can do," and of course reckless big fathers who swing one very high are quite the pleasantest persons. But there is such a thing as swinging too high when one is only three, and one day she called out to her father: "That's enough highness!" and then added, hastily: "But it's not enough swingness!" Anybody who has a child in the house

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can imagine how the family overworked that formula during the succeeding weeks.

She is very fond of referring to certain imaginary sisters of hers, whose number varies with mood and circumstances. One day she startled us by the truly staggering announcement: "I had a million sisters—but they all died 'cept three." When asked the reason for this unprecedented mortality, she replied promptly: "They were killed in the war." (She pronounced it like "star.")

Numbers, indeed, seem to assert an early fascination for children. They pass through a harrowing stage when nearly every question must be answered in terms of pounds, gallons, or inches. "How deep is that pond, mother?" "Oh, it's not very deep," you answer comfortably, out of the untroubled depths of your own thoughts. "But how *deep* is it?" "Oh, about two feet," you answer, hastily arousing yourself. "But how *deep* is it?" this time with a tweak at your sleeve, and an imperiousness that threatens to require discipline. Then, if you are wise, you will assert unhesitatingly that that pond is three feet five inches deep —and peace will reign.

The six-year-old has observed that millions and thousands are not as common in adult speech as less pretentious numerals; and he evidently has an ambition to use them in the convincing, offhand way that sounds so interesting in the conversation of his elders. "Did sister cry while mother was gone?" he is asked. "Yes, she did, mother." "Did she cry very long?" And then he answers, in his most businesslike masculine voice: "Oh, only about *twenty-four hours!*"

The mere inaccuracies of children—little tricks and pronunciations due to the fact that they have simply failed to hear or to remember correctly, are inimitably quaint, characteristic, and touching. Perhaps it is their unconsciousness of the linguistic pitfalls into which they step so rashly that makes these little blunders so endearing; at any rate I always have a special desire to kiss the little girl who comes to ask me to tie up her "thinger," and who tells me she is "such in a hurry" because she thinks it is going to bleed. And the little boy who inquires about the "alfahol" stove provokes, coincidently with the irrepressible grown-up smile, the same adoring and protecting impulse.

"IF you don't play solitaire"—the man across the room is thumping out each syllable with a card dictatorially laid down on the table—"you won't be able to pass away the time when you grow old."

"If you don't cultivate a hobby," chants his brother, poking among strange contraptions in his cabinet, "you'll grow old before your time."

Required Pleasures

"The man who doesn't play golf is going to die at sixty, and he might as well"—this idea is supplied by a magazine lying on my table.

For my own part, I'm busy trying to write a plausible regret about the picnic my benevolent friend wants to arrange for next Thursday. It is difficult, and I reflect that the shame with which one refuses to undertake a disagreeable duty is nothing to the confusion which covers the person who attempts to beg off from some bit of amusement.

Recreations prescribed; duties elective: this is the parlous state toward which our school of life seems tending.

The letter I am writing appears suddenly to turn into a declaration of war. Before the whole world and my friends I undertake to protest against the tyranny of required pleasures, and to support my position by the force of unanswerable logic. Leaning back comfortably in my chair I proceed to formulate a manifesto.

The notion that holding a neighbor's baby is a privilege and a joy has long since been exploded in literature, and yet young mothers go on offering this pleasure, and criticising the technique of the performance as if the victims had a real desire to be coached. Even those who flee the baby are prone to hold out their own little pets, demanding that their friends adopt the particular games or holiday occupations or shows that they themselves enjoy. Social workers busily provide recreation for the unemployed. Half the world is ready to tell both the rich and the poor how to spend their leisure moments; and those of us who are neither rich nor poor receive advice from our acquaintances. Toward the diversions of the other person the public assumes altogether too solemn a responsibility.

If recreation is the heart of life, as the social workers maintain, the one essential element in existence, it would seem to be a somewhat personal matter, giving opportu-

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nity for individual initiative. But the poor are not the only people whose amusements are pitifully restricted to a few fashionable types. When we greet an acquaintance who has spent a week's holiday in New York, do we expect him to tell us of some individual choice of diversion, among the many that might be found there? Hardly. He knows so well what to say that the plays he has seen and the restaurants where he has eaten are listed already among his conversational precautions.

I sympathize with the man who concealed from the compilers of *Who's Who* his favorite recreations as if they had been the bones of the family skeleton, though in truth they were innocent even beyond gardening and golf. Such monotony as appears among the pastimes registered in that amusing book would indicate the failure of our civilization if it were matched by a similar conventionality in the record of work and achievement.

The sameness of "automobiling," "sailing," "golf," is drearier in print, let us hope, than in real life. My most affectionate feeling for the automobile was induced by an unscheduled spontaneity of a machine belonging to a friend of mine who had included me in one of his carefully arranged pleasure tours. My friend was so much annoyed that I didn't venture to tell him how pleased I felt at the overturn of his too adequate plans. The machine stuck (the word is doubtless untechnical); my friend and I spent our holiday in a country hotel; I, at least, slept through a blissful afternoon and became thus a happier human being. To plan a nap and go off to that country hotel to take it would have been too absurd. The beauty of the afternoon lay in the perfect harmony between my mood and the recreation that offered itself at the moment. Any anticipation would have ruined it.

My friend wanted, above all things, to carry out the scheme that he had made for the day; but he had made that scheme, and there he would have had the advantage of me. He was, after all, asking me to hold his baby.

Any work that a man does may be supposed to contribute to the well or ill being of the world. The world has, therefore, a right within limits to help him plan it. But recreation is not necessarily a social affair, social workers to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor need it be foreseen, scheduled, even by the conscientious citizen who intends to get, somewhere and at some time, his reasonable share of entertainment.

If Nature had not taken a hand in arranging our recreations the field would be freer for human dictation. But the truth is that we have to play as we can. It was a clever Frenchwoman who said: "Les belles dents rendent gaies." When beautiful teeth determine our manner of saying good-morning to the world, it is foolish for our friends to quarrel with our temperament.

The jack-in-the-box contrivances with which some people force amusement upon their outraged acquaintances represent the *reductio ad absurdum* of required pleasures. My army of revolt might well be armed with such odious weapons. Every person who tells his neighbor to play golf, or go fishing, should have trained upon him an innocent-looking gun from which would issue a surprising stream of water or an agitating snake.

This picture of the battle amuses me, and I dare say I am smiling when the player of solitaire across the room looks over at me. His eyebrows rise. "If I were you," he remarks, "I would work while I worked and play when I had leisure. Do you call it recreation to sit there doing nothing?"

"Why don't you take up photography?" asks his brother; "that would keep you outdoors a good deal and give you something to show your friends."

"But suppose I prefer a hobby that isn't very presentable?" The two men pause in shocked silence, and I seize the opportunity. "If I never ask the world to admire it I can have all the more fun with it myself."

"Is it really so outlandish?"

With only an inward smile at the thought of my gentle little hobby, I sternly continue: "I shall elect my own pleasures and let other people elect theirs. I shall never attempt to arrange a curriculum for my friends. And as for that picnic next Thursday——"

"I wouldn't let anybody browbeat me into going to any picnic"—it is the devotee of solitaire who has spoken.

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THE FIELD OF ART

RHEIMS AND LOUVAIN

BETWEEN the Seine and the Rhine lay once a beautiful land wherein more history was made, and recorded in old monuments full of grace and grandeur and fancy, than in almost any other region of the world. The old names were best, for each aroused memory and begot strange dreams: Flanders, Brabant, the Palatinate; Picardy, Valois, Champaigne, Franche-Comté; Artois, Burgundy, and Bar. And the town names ring with the same sonorous melody, evoking the ghosts of a great and indelible past: Bruges, Ghent, Louvain, and Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, Coblentz, and Treves; Ypres and Lille, Tournay and Fontenay, Arras and Malplaquet, Laon, Nancy, Verdun, and Varennes, Amiens, Soissons, and Rheims. Cæsar, Charlemagne, St. Louis, Napoleon, with proconsuls, paladins, crusaders, and marshals unnumbered; kings, prince bishops, monks, knights, and aureoled saints take form and shape again at the clang of the splendid names.

And in all these places, and by all these men (and elsewhere endlessly, and by hands unnumbered), two thousand years had wrought its visible manifestation in abbey, church, and cathedral, in manor and palace and castle, in trade hall and civic hall, and in library and seminary and school.

Wars, great and small, have swept it from river to river, but much has been free for a century and all of it free for forty years. Under every oppression and every adversity it has thriven and grown rich, not in material things alone, but in those commodities that have actual intrinsic value; and two months ago it was the most prosperous, peaceful, and industrious quarter of Europe. Whatever the war, however violent the opposing agencies, its priceless records of architecture and other arts were piously or craftily spared, except when the madness of the French Revolution swept over its convents and cloisters, leaving Villers, St. Bavon, St. Jean des Vignes, the Abbaye des Lys, dead witnesses of the faith that had built them, and the spared monuments as well.

When the University of Louvain recently passed in the smoke and flame of a murdered city; when the church of St. Pierre and the cathedral of Malines and the shrine of Our Lady of Rheims were shattered by bombs and swept by devouring fire, there was something in it all other than the grim necessity of a savage war; there was the symbol of a new thing in the world, built on all Louvain, Malines and Rheims denied, and destroying the very outward show of what could not exist on earth side by side with its potent and dominant negation.

Thus far, of the great cities, Liège, Louvain, Malines, and Rheims are gone, with the greater part of their treasured art, while Laon, Soissons, and Namur have been grievously wrecked, Antwerp and Brussels are devastated, and innumerable smaller cities lie in the path of a furious army. Apparently, Amiens, Noyon, Bruges, and Ghent are now safe, but endless opportunities open for destruction and pillage, and we may well be prepared for irreparable loss before the invader is hurled back across his natural river frontier. Let us consider, not what already has been annihilated, but the kind of art it was, so measuring, in a degree, the quality of our loss—and of what we still may lose.

First of all, there are the towns themselves, for all art is not concentrated in hôtel de ville and cathedral; it shows itself sometimes in more appealing guise in the river villages and proud cities, and its testimony to a great past is here equally potent. Malines, Dinant, and Huy, all of which are gone, were treasures that belonged to all the world; Namur and Plombières we could not spare, and as for Bruges and Ghent, even apart from their exquisite architecture and their treasures of painting, the soul shudders at what might happen there were they involved in the retreat of a disorganized army, when one considers what happened to Liège and Louvain in its victorious advance. All Belgium and Luxembourg, all Picardy and Champaigne are, or were, rich with lovely little towns and villages, each a work of art in itself: they are shrivelling like a flower garden under a first frost, and, it may be, in a little while none will remain.

The major architecture of this unhappy

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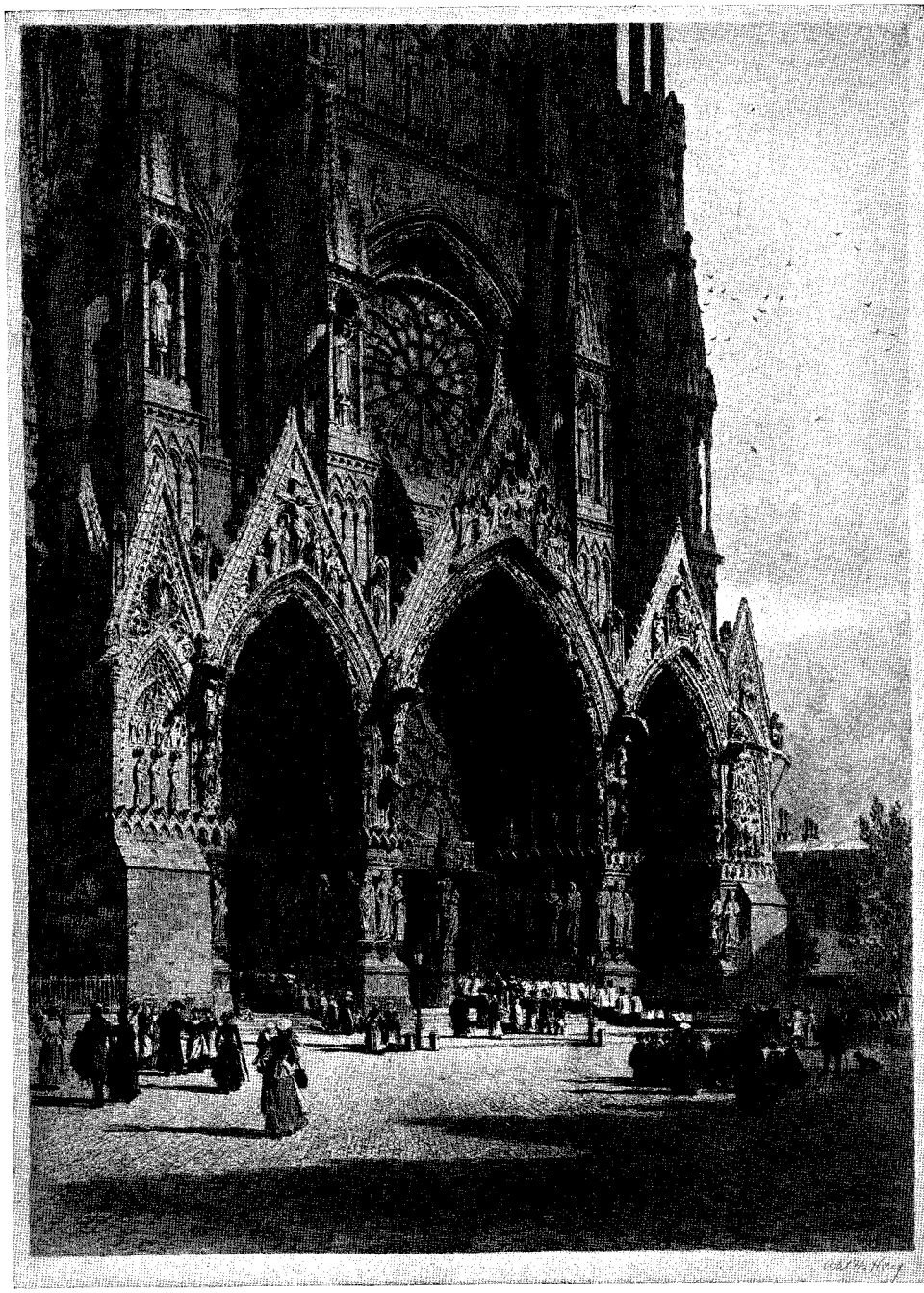

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The great western portals of the cathedral at Rheims.

From the etching by Axel Haig.

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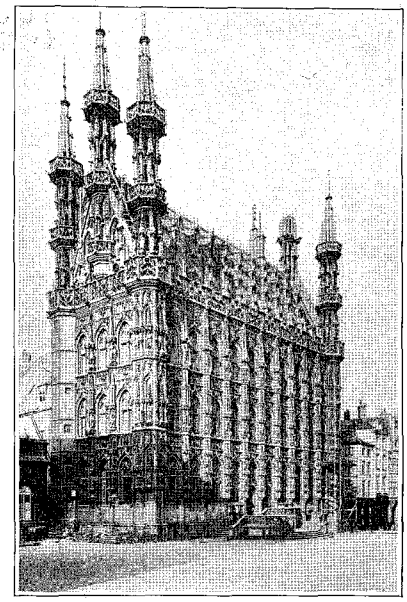
Hôtel de Ville, Bruges.

land falls into three classes and three periods of time. Oldest and most priceless are the churches, and these are of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the ages when religion was one and secure and was building a great civilization that we would fain see equalled again. Then come the town halls and guildhalls of the fifteenth century, each speaking for the proud freedom of merchant and burgher, when the hold of religion was weakening a little, and the first signs were showing themselves of what, in the end, was to have issue in this war of wars; finally come the town houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in all their quaint individuality and their over-riding self-esteem, though fine still, and with hints of the great art that already had passed.

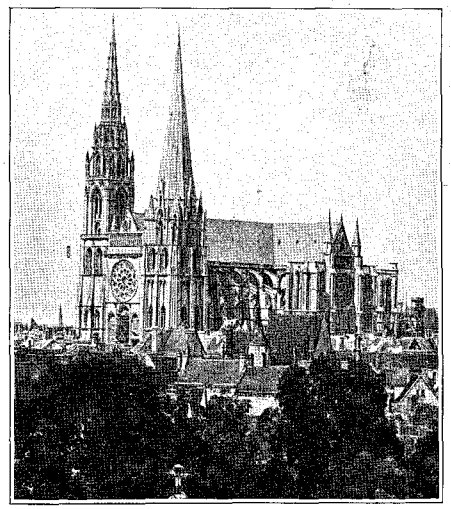
Brussels is full of these, and Antwerp; Louvain had them, and Charleville, only a few weeks ago; in Bruges and Ghent and Arras they fill whole streets and stand in silent accusation of what we of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have offered as our contribution to the housing of civilization.

Of the civic halls the list is endless: Brussels, Malines, Bruges, Ypres, Ghent, Antwerp, Mons, Oudenarde, and Liège; Compiègne, St. Quentin, Arras, Valenciennes, ranging from the grave solemnity of the



Hôtel de Ville, Louvain.

enormous and wide-spread Ypres, to the lacy fantasticism of Louvain and Oudenarde. Architecture has gone far from the Salle Synodale of Sens, and the Merveille of Mont St. Michel, and it has not gone altogether well, but how significant these stone fancies are of the abounding life and the splendid pride and the open-handed beneficence of the fifteenth-century burghers, who loved their towns and bent the rebellious masonry to their will, working it into a kind of stony lace and embroidery to the glory of trade and civic spirit! If



Chartres cathedral.

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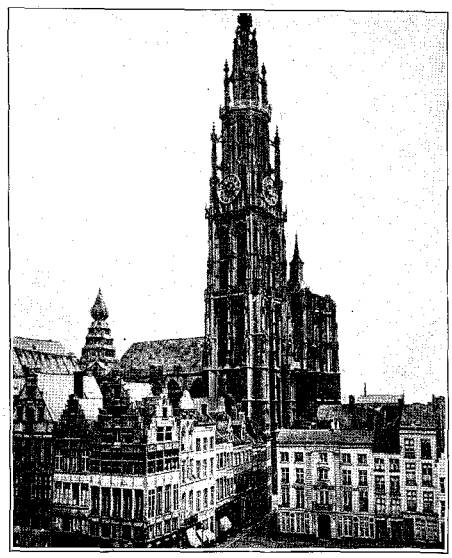
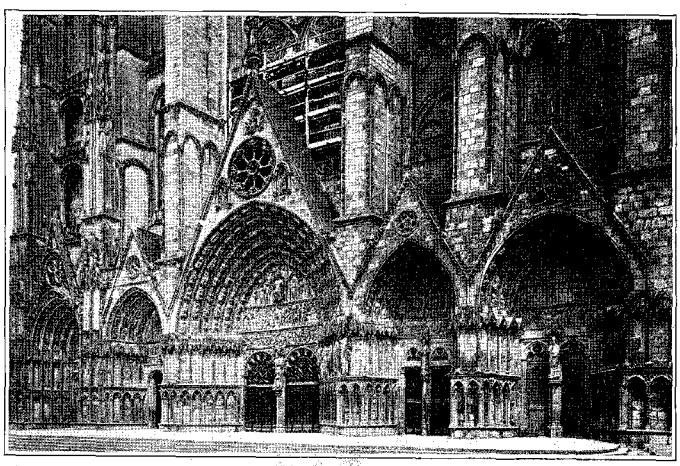
we should lose them now, as we almost lost Louvain, standing in the midst of the roaring flame and drifting smoke, while tall churches and rich universities and fair old houses crumbled and died around it, what should we not lose?

And the churches, those matchless monuments, four, five, and six centuries old, where generations have brought all their best to glorify God, where glass and sculpture, tapestries and fretted woodwork, pictures, and gold and silver wrought cunningly into immortal art—how are we to speak of these, or think of them, with St. Pierre of Louvain and St. Rombault of Malines still smoking with their dying fires, while piece by piece the calcined stone falls in the embers, and while Rheims, one of the wonders of the world, stands gaunt and shattered, wrecked by bombs, swept by fire, its windows that rivalled Chartres split into irremediable ruin, its statues devastated that once stood on a level with the sculptures of Greece?



The cathedral, Antwerp.

The catastrophe itself is so unthinkable that the world does not now half-realize it. And yet, what of all that remains in the pathway of the conflict—St. Gudule of Brussels, St. Bavon of Ghent, and the cathedrals of Antwerp, Tongres, and Tournai; and in France that matchless sequence of which Rheims was once the central jewel, Soissons, Senlis and Noyon, St. Remi, Amiens, and Laon; here, with Rheims, are seven churches such as man never surpassed, and equalled only at Paris, Chartres, Coutances, and Bourges; each is of a different *timbre*, each a different expression of the greatest century of Christian civilization, and, given the opportunity, there is no reason why each should not suffer the fate of Rheims.



Entrance to the cathedral, Bourges.

There is a thin and sinister philosophy that avows no building, no consummate work of art of any kind, "worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier," justifying its statement on the basis of a superficial humanism. Never was a more malignant ethic. A man is valuable in proportion to what he is and does for righteous society, and for what he makes of himself as a free and immortal soul, responsible to God. Go through the mills and bureaus and barracks and palaces of the world—you will find thousands of peasants, workmen, soldiers, and aristocrats whose contribution to Christian civilization is nothing, and will be nothing however long they may live; who forget their souls and deny their God; and of

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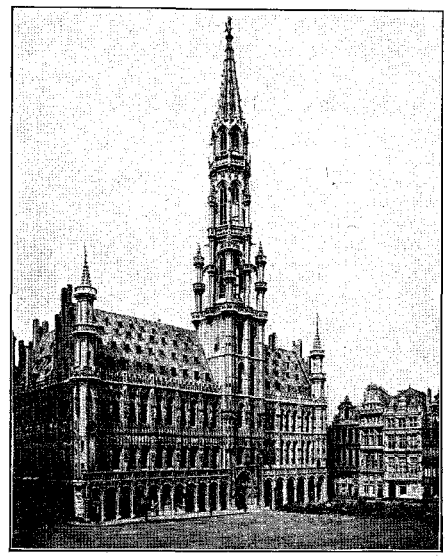
these we can say that they weigh far less in the scale than one such potent influence as Amiens or Rheims, or the library and schools of Louvain, or the pictures of Memling and the Van Eycks in Bruges and Antwerp and Ghent.

Those that cry loudest for the sanctity of human life and its priority before art and letters, most insistently hurl a hundred thousand lives against inevitable death, and spread black starvation over myriads of women and children, in order that their privilege of selling inferior and unnecessary products to far-away savages may be preserved intact. Against this set the cathedrals and universities, and the exquisite art of France and Belgium and the Rhine; consider what it meant once, what it means even now, what for the future it is destined to mean as never before.



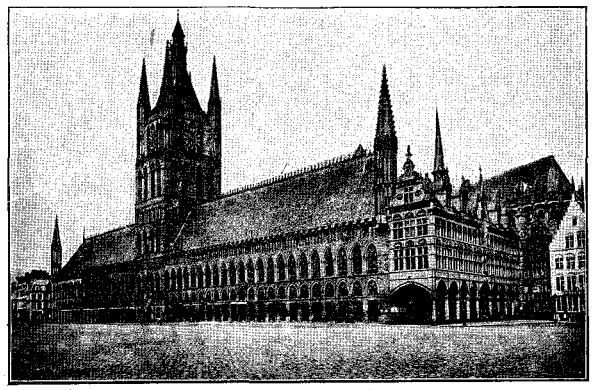
Hôtel de Ville, Brussels.

For the old passes: the old that began with Machiavelli and ended with von Bernhardi. It is not alone Prussia that will be purged by the fire of an inevitable conflict, nor Germany, nor all the Teuton lands; it is the whole world that sold its birthright for a mess of pottage and now, in terror of the price at last to be paid, denounces the infamous contract and fights to the death against the armies of the Moloch it helped to fashion. And when the field is won, what happens but the coming into its own again of the very power that made Rheims and Louvain, the recovery of the old and righteous and Christian standard of values, the building on the ruins of five centuries of a new civilization where whatever art that remains will play its due part as the revealer of that Absolute Truth that brought it into being, forgotten now for very long.

Then the pictures of Flanders and Umbria and Tuscany, the sculpture of France, the music of Teuton and Slav, the "minor arts" of all mediævalism, the architecture of Bourges and Amiens and Chartres will both reveal and inspire with doubled power.

And in all and through all, Rheims in its ruin will be a more potent agency of regeneration than the perfection of Chartres or the finality of Bourges.

Ralph Adams Cram.



Hôtel de Ville, Ypres.

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